DISSENT

Berlin and Geneva

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A Critique of "The Ugly American"

Fact & Fiction on Foreign Aid	JOSEPH BUTTINGER

SUMMER 1959

75c

DISSENT

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AMONG OURSELVES

We're happy to report that the first printing of *Voices of Dissent* has almost been exhausted. While they last, single copies and bundle orders are still obtainable. Reviews have been appearing in a number of magazines, and we hope, in a future DISSENT, to publish a round-up of the more interesting ones.

●

A major event of the past spring for Dissenters and other socialists in New York City was a large public meeting at which Erich Fromm gave a statement of his views on socialism. About 700 people attended the meeting, which was sponsored by DISSENT and the *Socialist Call*.

●

What can you do to help? Well, one simple thing: subscribe for two years, instead of one. Over the two year period it saves you a dollar, and for us it cuts in half the amount of clerical work we have to do.

●

Norman Mailer's now-famous DISSENT article, "The White Negro," has been reprinted as a handsome pamphlet by the City Lights Bookshop, 261 Columbus Avenue, San Francisco, 11, Cal. The pamphlet, which also contains critical comments on Mailer's article by Jean Malaquais and Ned Polsky, sells for 35 cents. Please order *direct* from City Lights.

●

DISSENT discussion groups continue to pop up, and sometimes fade out, in various parts of the country. One of the liveliest is at Ohio State University in Columbus. This student group, which, like all other such groups, has no official connection with DISSENT, was started in mid-year; and with the unwitting help of some malicious downtown newspaper publicity, has drawn very sizable audiences to its meetings, almost all of which have ended with long periods of informal discussion. At the last meeting of this group, held on a Saturday night, 250 people came to hear Irving Howe speak on "Socialism as Problem and Ideal."

In New England there have also been some interesting DISSENT activities. Here's an excerpt from a letter from Bob Bone, a DISSENT stalwart in New Haven:

"A weekend conference was held at Yale in early May under the auspices of DISSENT and the local George Orwell Forum. Attended by about 50, the conference drew students from Yale, Brandeis, Harvard, Columbia, and Conn. College for Women.

"Lew Coser led off with a talk which extended the concept of alienation from the production-process to the sphere of mass consumption. Mike Walzer followed with a political portrait of the present student generation. B. J. Widick wound up with a defense of the labor movement —a basic necessity with today's undergraduates.

"Next day, Seymour Melman presented some fascinating material from his *Inspection for Disarmament*, which cuts the ground from under the common assumptions of the armaments race. Richard Hunt closed with a fresh examination of 'The Idea of Economic Equality.'

"Both intellectually and socially, the weekend generated a healthy socialist élan; it provided at least a glimpse of the possibilities of community which Lew Coser stressed in his opening remarks. We hope to make it an annual affair in the New England area."

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DISSENT

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SUMMER 1959

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A QUARTERLY OF SOCIALIST OPINION

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THE ILLUSION OF STABILITY

Richard Lowenthal

Both sides recognize that any action they can take in this conflict is necessarily limited by the "balance of terror"—that while nuclear war may be threatened as the ultimate trump in the game of diplomatic bluff, no step must ever be taken which would actually be likely to bring it about. But while the Communists have developed a whole arsenal of revolutionary techniques for using the forces favorable to them in order to make conquests without risk of major war, as lately demonstrated in Iraq, the Western powers have so far failed to do so and waver impotently between empty military bluster and the rejection of every support for "subversive" forces as "too risky." Yet in a struggle of that nature, it should be obvious that the side which pursues the illusion of stability in a changing world and renounces the political counter-offensive on principle is ultimately doomed.

At that point, the charge of "appeasement" assumes a new, but legitimate meaning. If the term is narrowly defined in the context of our experience with the Nazis, it means "concessions made in order to avoid war, which end by bringing about war in worse conditions," and the defenders of present British policy are quite right in saying that such an outcome is now highly improbable. But if we adopt, as I think we ought to, a broader definition appropriate to the contemporary context, appeasement now means "concessions made in order to escape from the tension of permanent conflict"; and then the charge does apply. The illusion of the old appeasement was that, by yielding to Hitler's most urgent demands, we could avoid war. The illusion of the new appeasement is that, by yielding to Khrushchev, we could "end the Cold War."

•

In recent years, this illusion has taken a variety of forms in different Western countries. Before the advent of de Gaulle, a number of French politicians cherished the hope that if only the West would support the Soviets in consolidating their hold on Eastern Europe, the Soviets would oblige by helping France to consolidate her hold first on Indo-China, and later on Algeria. British Conservatives are liable to similar recurrent daydreams with regard to British interests in the Middle East. Underlying it all, there is the persistent belief that, because the Russian people are concerned with their own problems of economic growth and have little interest in "world revolution," the party dictatorship that rules them could abandon its revolutionary ideology and its fundamental hostility to the non-Communist world—as if that ideology of permanent conflict was not an essential element in its internal cohesion and the justification of its rule!

[Reprinted from the British publication, *The Twentieth Century*, May 1959.]

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THE KREMLIN, GERMANY, AND THE BOMB

Lewis Coser

The Kremlin's actions are impelled not by an ideology but by an objective: to extend the area of its control and to maximize the degree to which it can manipulate and disintegrate those parts of the world not yet under its control. To a totalitarian regime anything not yet "coordinated" is of necessity threatening, the outer world is evil because uncontrolled, hence only total dominion can give ultimate reassurance.

But ultimate objectives do not necessarily govern political moves at any point in time. Hence it is senseless to deduce from the Russian urge toward world control that one cannot negotiate with the Kremlin about any particular, immediate problem. The Russian policy makers, knowing that there is no chance at the present time to achieve a monopoly of world power, are quite willing to settle for a duopoly. They are ready to come to terms with the only other world power, the United States, for a partition of the world into agreed-upon zones of influence. In fact, the approximate balance of atomic power between the Big Two has led in the last few years to just such a duopoly of power. But, and this fact must be underlined, this state of affairs is rapidly coming to an end. That is why, or so I believe, the Russian policy makers are now willing to enter serious negotiations with the West. That is why there now exist increased chances for an escape from the balance of terror under which the world has chafed for the last few years.

There is only one situation which might allow for a halt in the all-out atomic arms race: the wish of the participants to keep others from entering it. From the moment that other powers, especially Germany, enter the atomic club the world duopoly of power would be upset, and upset in an unpredictable way. There is nothing more perturbing to totalitarian planners than an unpredictable situation. The Russian policy makers may now be ready to enter into serious negotiations with the West because they fear that the military bi-polarity of the recent past is about to be upset by the imminent possibility that several NATO nations—and some neutrals—will acquire atomic weapons in the near future. This accounts, I believe, for the apparent readiness of the Russian policy makers to negotiate more seriously on inspected atomic test suspension and also on other matters.

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BUT HOW IS ALL THIS related to the Berlin crisis which is now at the center of attention? I do not believe that we can understand that crisis if we restrict our focus to Germany. The Russians have the advantage of being able to create a crisis situation in a number of danger spots all over the world; they chose Berlin, but they might as well have chosen the Middle East or Quemoy. The crisis cannot be solved, it cannot even be fully understood, if we fix a myopic gaze on Berlin. This *is* an age of global politics.

Yet the German question is, of course, a central question for the Russian policy makers precisely because the possession of atomic and H bombs by a Germany potentially bent on revenge has been their nightmare for several years. The American plan for German unification, predicated on Germany remaining within NATO and having access to atomic weapons, has, of course, no chance whatever of meeting with any kind of positive response from the Russians. Such a proposal might still have made some sense at the time when there was an obvious disparity of power between America and Russia, but it becomes nonsensical and purely propagandistic in view of the rough power equilibrium which now in fact exists. Why should the Russians give up their overlordship over East Germany—and reunification with democratic elections would necessarily entail this—if that would only mean that the whole of Germany would join NATO?

The *Manchester Guardian* recently wrote that the West had failed to put the *"one question which might seriously embarrass the Russians: Will you agree to reunion through free elections if Germany leaves NATO?"* The offer was not made because American foreign policy has been hopelessly in the tow of Adenauer's immobilism and because, furthermore, the State Department has not yet fully understood the new world situation in which the United States finds itself. When NATO was originally conceived it was thought that European rearmament would involve a build-up of conventional arms to enable NATO to halt a full-scale attack without recourse to atomic weapons. But in the age of the H bomb this conception is utterly anachronistic. Today's NATO forces can only provide a trip wire or a fire alarm, they are no longer militarily decisive in themselves. As Raymond Aron has argued: "land armies no longer have the function, even hypothetically, of waging a war in which the thermonuclear horror would not be unleashed; their sole function is to create the *causus belli atomici.*" But if this is their sole function then it is obvious that a few divisions of horse cavalry would fulfill exactly the same purpose as the whole NATO force...

But let us assume that the Western powers would tell Russia that a united Germany would remain outside of NATO, would Khrushchev, as the *Manchester Guardian* argues, necessarily refuse? Here we must return to our earlier assessment of Russian foreign policy. The Russians are vitally concerned with denying access to atomic armaments to Germany and other second-rank powers. This objective looms so large in Russian calculations that they might be willing to make a number of otherwise distasteful concessions in order to attain it. Hence if

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America were willing to offer the continuation of the present atomic duopoly (England might be considered a simple dependent of America in all major respects), it would be offering something of real value from the point of view of Russian interests.

GIVEN THE PREVENTION of German atomic rearmament, a number of other proposals might most profitably be discussed with the Russians. The size and location of foreign garrisons in both East and West Germany, the future international obligations and status of a united Germany, the status of Berlin itself as a basis for propaganda and political action could all become subjects for negotiations, as George Kennan has suggested. The establishment of a zone of disengagement comprising both parts of Germany as well as Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary; a thinning out by stages of foreign national forces leading to a withdrawal of the foreign troops of the NATO and Warsaw pacts; and an unconditional ban on all nuclear weapons from an agreed-upon central European area *might* be acceptable to the Russians *if* such moves were predicated on keeping Germany out of the atomic club. Steps towards German unification by stages might then no longer appear as utterly unacceptable to the Kremlin.

But suppose the Russians reject unification nevertheless. Then the only realistic alternative for American policy makers would seem to be to abandon the frozen stance on East Germany which has been maintained for so long. If there is to be no reunion in the foreseeable future then there remains only the alternative of accepting the fact that short of nuclear war there is for the time being no chance of getting rid of the East German regime, distasteful as it may be. Hence recognition of that regime remains the only realistic alternative. What Raymond Aron has argued in another context seems eminently reasonable in the German case: "partition is the substitute for neutrality." None of the European powers are really very interested in German unification, de Gaulle's assurance to Adenauer to the contrary notwithstanding. It is even doubtful whether unification is as popular within Germany as it was a few years ago. If the Russians were to reject unification along the above lines, then one must assume that they are willing to trade recognition of Eastern Germany for some mutually acceptable arrangement for Berlin.

It might be suggested that this second solution would only amount to a perpetuation and legitimation of the bi-polarity of power now existing in Europe and the world. This is indeed so, but then such freezing of the *status quo* of partition would at least be bought at the price of pledges which would guarantee the freedom of West Berlin. (I wish people would stop dragging in the red herring about "you cannot trust Russian pledges." Of course you cannot trust them to live up to pledges which they consider contrary to their interests. But it is often to their interest to keep pledges. If that were not the case Vienna, Helsinki and Belgrade would be at least as endangered as Berlin. The

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Russians keep pledges, and not only the Russians, just as long as it is to their interest to keep them.)

THE FREEZING and legitimation of the *status quo* would still leave the world in the same state of tension which has become all but intolerable in recent years. Both sides have by now enough nuclear forces to destroy each other several times. Both sides prepare for a war that nobody wants to fight. Hence an agreement on Germany ought to be considered only as a preliminary to an over-all settlement with the Russians. Such a settlement must first be centered, as I argued earlier, on a limitation of the membership of the atomic club, on an agreed-upon cessation of the testing of new nuclear weapons, and, at a later stage, on an agreed-upon reduction in atomic stockpiles, missiles and conventional armaments.

I am aware that atomic disarmament is no cure-all, but I am also convinced that without an end to the runaway nuclear race through enforceable safeguards binding on all, there can be no cure. If the atomic race continues much longer, the strain on the nerves of those who hold the ultimate trigger—and while these may be statesmen they may also be pilots in planes armed with nuclear weapons—may be too difficult to sustain. If nuclear war may depend not on intent but on accident or miscalculation then it is to the interest, of *all* major nations to prevent the continuation of a situation in which this can occur.

Precisely because the Russian policy makers are intent in some indeterminate future upon extending their control over the whole globe, they must have a vital interest in the prevention of incalculable world destruction. The diffusion of atomic weapons combined with the danger of accident or miscalculation is so portentous a menace that for the first time in the history of mankind it is to the interest of all powers to agree upon the common objective of atomic disarmament. But then the statesmen of the world are not always interested in their interest. Paradoxically it becomes a task of radical critics to recall it to them.

June 1, 1959

Chins Up With Hanson Baldwin

Lieut. Gen. Clarence R. Huebner, director of the State Civil Defense Commission, predicted that within five years most Americans would be living in fallout shelters and would see sunshine only by taking a calculated risk.

Underground living will be enforced, he said, by the grim realities of a world in which even small countries would possess enough standardized intercontinental ballistic missiles to "take out" any other nation.

Earlier Hanson W. Baldwin, military news analyst of The New York Times, advised the information officer to tell the public what needed to be done "without making them unduly despondent."

—*New York Times*, January 8, 1959

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CO-EXISTENCE REVISITED

Henry M. Pachter

The verb, to co-exist, only has plural forms: *we* co-exist. Moreover, its voices are passive or reflexive: I suffer your co-existence with me. The relationship so described is neither war nor peace; but it implies a tacit understanding that two powers or power blocs will respect each other's sovereignty and will not use open, direct aggression in trying to change the territorial status quo. This minimum of co-existence has been maintained uneasily between the Soviet Empire and the Atlantic combination ever since the Berlin airlift. A Russian attempt to change the status quo in Korea was frustrated by American might and subsequently the Chinese thwarted the American drive north of the 38th parallel. During the East German revolt of June 1953 we applauded politely but lifted not a finger to prevent its suppression; in December 1956 the U.S. did raise its voice and had the Soviet Union "condemned" no less than ten times by the U.N. Assembly for suppressing Hungary. But again we took no diplomatic or military action which might have led to the withdrawal of Russian troops.

The cold war has been fought to a standstill, with each side admitting that it cannot hope to "liberate" populations in the other's orbit. At least on the European front, it now looks as though the powers might be ready to conclude an armistice or even to formalize the uneasy peace. Under the terms of co-existence, enforced by Soviet power and fear of nuclear war, such a peace would mean that *self-determination is not recognized for peoples now living under Soviet control.* A year ago we stated this as a condition of fact, tacitly agreed to by Dulles on condition that he would not have to admit it publicly. But now Khrushchev wants this humiliating guarantee in writing. Using his tactical advantage in Berlin, he thinks he can force the Western powers to recognize, i.e. to legitimize, his East German satellite republic and to freeze, i.e. to legitimize, the present borderline between the "socialist" and the non-socialist camps.

With the Iron Curtain once established *de jure* where today it is only *de facto,* the implication would not be lost on other nations under Quisling governments: the West has given you up; it is useless to stage rebellions à la Hungary, coups à la Tito or even thaws à la Gomulka; the Russian armies will return by right where in 1956 they came with a bad conscience and against the protests of the civilized world. During the past year or two, Khrushchev's aim has not changed; but his grow-

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ing power, skill and ruthlessness have softened the West's determination not to surrender other people's rights to self-determination.

The "package" which Mr. Herter placed on the Geneva table was a terminal effort to show what we ought to fight for; but he dropped this unnegotiable document with indecent haste and proposed to settle for something much smaller, either *de jure* or *de facto:* the East German puppet regime to gain some status as a controlling agency on its territory and the West to retain the right of occupation in West Berlin. This will satisfy nearly everybody: Khrushchev remains in the position to repeat his squeeze-play on Berlin any time he pleases; he does not have to relinquish to Grotewohl and Ulbricht more power than he thinks fit for these underlings; Western Germany is free to "increase the exchanges below cabinet level" with the East Germans and can continue to dream of Berlin as their common capital; for the NATO conscience, finally, Berlin may still symbolize a beacon of liberty and a promise to the unliberated peoples of the East. *The summit meeting will not quite bury the cold war axe; but it will increase the possibilities of co-existence, with the advantage, we fear, on the Soviet side.*

THE NEGOTIATIONS which Khrushchev's ultimatum set starting last November have revealed basic flaws in the Western defense posture. France is more concerned about the Mediterranean fleet than about NATO unity; England seems at times to think of herself as a "mediator" between East and West rather than as belonging to one party; in Germany NATO begins to be regarded as the greatest obstacle to re-unification; elsewhere the NATO obligations toward Germany begin to look burdensome, if not dangerous; even in the United States, a new isolationism, recently emerging on the Left, questions a policy which requires us to assert from time to time that we are ready to die for Berlin. Whether Herter can use alarm words like "agonizing reappraisal" to stop such centrifugal lures, remains to be seen. "Disengagement" plans vocally propounded by panicky politicians in all Western countries promise Khrushchev the American withdrawal from Europe which remained Stalin's unfulfilled aim. Meanwhile the State Department impresses no one with its logic that 80 million Germans united are easier to control than separated, and the Germans are not making friends for themselves by renewing their claim to the frontiers of 1937. For this very reason Soviet diplomacy is not now buying any disengagement schemes. *If Khrushchev just sits still and watches NATO disintegrate, he can avoid paying a price for its premature demise;* meanwhile it is good for political baiting—Clausewitz recommends that no question be settled so long as its unsettled state is an embarrassment for the adversary. This is not a question of Mr. Khrushchev's difficulties with his friends, of his character and moods; any second-class counselor in his foreign office can tell him by the textbook that he should not be in a bargaining mood today; and therefore, *there will be no bargain on Germany either at the summit or elsewhere, except as Bonn agrees to Khrushchev's terms.*

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IN THE UNDER-DEVELOPED AREAS, likewise, the present mode of co-existence tends to weaken the position of the "have" powers. People who are still hungry and dynamic look at the status quo not as something to be preserved but as something to be developed; co-existence to them is a fluid state of power relations which requires constant up-dating by slow or disorderly means. The traditional powers might once have adjusted to these changes; palace coups were frequent, affected the balance of world powers but little and their effects never lasted long. Even the more significant changes of recent revolutions which did affect the social and political structure of the underdeveloped areas might still have met with sympathy, or even found encouragement in the West. The cold war, however, has changed the meaning of change, and the advent of totalitarian forces has falsified its mechanics. The Western powers are hopelessly committed to defending positions, however anomalous, and governments, however odious, whose abandonment would weaken the status quo, which in turn is defined as that which cannot be abandoned. For the dynamics of change not only tend to favor the Soviet Union; they also tend to be irreversible. The Soviet Union can identify itself with change as such, though it is a mistake to identify resistance to change with a defense of capitalism.

The revolutionary nations crave recognition of their new status as independent countries which have grown up from under the tutelage of the big powers. In vain did the ex-colonialists offer their ex-wards economic concessions—for the anti-colonial revolution has taken a political turn: if once the grievance was the profit taken out of the country, now it is the privileged status of the foreigner; if once the hewers of wood and drawers of water rebelled against economic exploitation, now their politicians and officers stage pronunciamentos against being exploited as pawns in the great game of world politics. The Iraq revolution was directed less against the oil companies than against the Baghdad Pact, and it overthrew a government which had given the country a strength it had never had before, but which was stigmatized as a tool of imperialism. To stop this kind of upset, the old powers would have to, and do, add more rigidities to their defense of the status quo: dictatorship, militaristic terrorism, bloody suppression of popular movements; they are losing the ability to co-operate with progressive parties in the under-developed countries. While their adversary seems to espouse the justice of popular causes and the dynamism of change the world over, the *Western powers have become the prisoners of their counter-revolutionary allies everywhere, and in fact have become more reactionary abroad than they ever were at home.*

Even the well-meaning schemes to help under-developed countries on the way toward industrialization do not now sufficiently stir the imagination of progressive forces in these countries. Often conceived in the spirit of the cold war, some of these generous grants only have met the competition of similar Soviet donations. Yet, even if all these resources had been applied in the purest spirit, with the right method, at the place of optimum benefit and had not aroused suspicions that

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we were merely trying to buy friendship—even then their necessity would not prove their sufficiency: they are *a supplement to, but no substitute for a foreign policy which comes to grips with the fundamental problem of political change.*

PART OF THE DISILLUSIONMENT in the under-developed countries is due to the fact that independence has solved neither their economic problems nor increased their political self-respect. They have not gained more room for maneuver and have failed to constitute a neutral bloc of "third powers." For a while, high hopes had been attached to the formation of a group, extending from Stockholm to Bandung, which might use restraining influence on the two "blocs" or even act as an arbiter between them. In practice, no "Third Force" has been able to impose more co-existence on the first two; its components themselves find it difficult to co-exist with their neighbors; they become prisoners of their ancient quarrels and fall prey to their need for strong alliances. Instead of increasing the chances of peace, they have multiplied the dangers of war. The threat that they might acquire nuclear weapons is the nightmare of big power diplomats, their rivalries make the peace machinery of the United Nations nearly unworkable and the competition of larger powers for the good-will of the small ones may still engulf all in a general war. Paradoxically, *the movement for independence has intensified the "presence" of the big powers in the formerly undisputed areas.*

The idea of a "Third Force," based on the assumption that neutrality is possible, has again given way to the compulsion of alignment. For a while smaller countries could nourish the illusion that standing aloof means being spared; they could even imagine that by gaining their independence from Western colonialism they were not risking the embrace of Eastern imperialism. In fact their blindness did not protect them from the dangers they refused to see, and the result of so much praiseworthy effort toward multi-lateral co-existence has been a relapse into the two-camps world of the cold war. More countries are losing the status of independents; they become attached to one bloc or the other, and find it difficult to keep up as much as a semblance of the Bandung spirit of neutrality. In truth *we now are co-existing collectively rather than individually; one system of collective security co-exists competitively with the other.* The very word "co-existence" has lost its innocent meaning and has become the propaganda slogan of one side; Soviet imperialism now uses "co-existence" as a cover for its infiltration in neutral countries and as a fence to protect its Empire from infiltrators. Yet where the West tries to "co-exist actively" they cry "cold war."

BUT MUST CO-EXISTENCE ALWAYS remain a one-way street? Spokesmen of the left in many countries deny that we must play the Russian game of heads-I-win-tails-you-lose. We need not doom the peoples behind the Iron Curtain to despair and subservience; their fight for self-determination can be supported with diplomatic means. After

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the failure of "liberation," the principal device which they recommend goes by the name of "disengagement." Its essence is to get the Russian army out of East Germany and thereby to relieve the pressure on the satellite empire and eventually to roll back the Iron Curtain beyond the Pripet marshes. To make this scheme acceptable to the Kremlin, it is proposed to withdraw American troops behind the Rhine and to let a united Germany withdraw from its NATO obligation. A revival of the "Third Force" idea in Central Europe, which might be attractive to the Scandinavians, the Yugoslavs, the Egyptians, Indians and other Bandung powers, would then, it is argued, reverse the trend of Soviet magnetism for the weaker nations!

One has just to consider what such an offer might have achieved in December 1956, in order to understand its persuasiveness. But it has never been formulated with such clarity by its foremost spokesmen, and for an obvious reason: if the scheme is indeed so disastrous for the Soviet Union—as our friend Richard Lowenthal has brilliantly shown in a recent issue of *Encounter*—then no Soviet statesman is likely to accept it so long as he has the power to reject it. This indeed is what Stalin, Malenkov and Khrushchev have done consistently. At the Geneva Conference of 1955 a declaration of principle was extracted from Molotov, charging in effect the four powers to proceed with the reunification of Germany; it still has to be implemented. At this year's Geneva conference, the West tried to use the so-called German question as an opening wedge against the satellite empire. All similar plans presuppose that the Russians are so afraid of West Germany that they would rather be rid of East Germany too; that Khrushchev would rather give up what he has in order not to lose it; that he would rather expose the whole satellite empire to a threat in order to avert one to Eastern Germany; that the Russian army would rather yield a position than be forced to maintain it; that Khrushchev thinks a united Germany would out of sheer gratitude stay disarmed or renounce her Polish irredenta. Even if all the other assumptions were less fantastic, the Soviet Union could never allow East Germany to go back from "socialism" to capitalism. On the contrary, under the leadership of Pervukhin, that most advanced country in the satellite orbit is now being built up as the capital piece in empire planning and its living standards may well be comparable to West Germany's before the current seven-year plan runs out. The question of reunification might then be posed again, not by the West but by Pervukhin. The Russians think that by that time the 17 million East Germans may be strong enough to take over the 60 million West Germans.

How they might achieve that can be read in the so-called "Deutschland-Plan" published by the German Social Democratic Party which really deserves the name "All-Deutsche Socialist Party." It offers to representatives of both Germanys, the freely elected and the Moscow-appointed, "parity" not only in an all-German Parliament, but in the judiciary and in various economic institutions which conceivably might give Ulbricht's deputies a seat in the Ruhr authority and other insti-

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tutions of the European common market. It is not just conceivable but foreseeable that in this Assembly Communist demagoguery could force the Western socialists to vote with the Eastern deputies on key issues of the electoral law and of social legislation, thus giving them the necessary two-thirds majority to take over Western Germany by the same methods which succeeded in East Germany and Czechoslovakia. Instead of lowering the iron curtain at the Elbe, the SPD plan might extend it to the Rhine. Instead of extending the area of freedom, it might subject the 60 million to the regime of the 17 million, and the SPD would then be the first victim of its plan. *It sacrifices the cause of German self-determination to the cause of German unity at any price!* Moreover, since the West will not take such a loss any more quietly than the Russians, the plan is likely to bring war rather than disengagement. For the SPD plan makes both the U.S. and the USSR "guarantors" of a collective security arrangement between Germany and her Eastern neighbors! That truly is placing the thief in charge of the strongbox. *"Re-entry" by the major powers is the crux of any disengagement plan;* under its rigid definition of what constitutes a friendly, peace-loving government, the Soviet Union will not sign, let alone keep, any agreement never to re-occupy any part of Germany, should the majority there elect a government which, in Khrushchev's words, fails to represent its "true" interests.

But why should the Red army leave in the first place? It plainly cannot be forced out by threats, nor induced by attractive offers of "mutual" withdrawal. Conceivably, Soviet diplomats might wish to avoid being drawn into any conflict between the two Germanys or between Germans and Poles; but that clearly can be prevented more effectively with the Russian occupation than without. Conceivably, they might wish to prevent the equipment of West Germany with atomic rocketry; but they think the summit meeting will close the atomic club to all newcomers without Russia having to pay any price for a limitation which, they feel, is in the interest of the other two members too. Conceivably, they would like to prevent a further NATO build-up in Germany; but they are not willing to buy this with a retreat from their own build-up in East Germany and Poland. Conceivably Khrushchev might be hard pressed to fulfill some of his exaggerated domestic promises which threaten to land him in the guns-or-butter pitfall. That is precisely why he craves a summit meeting with Eisenhower. *He wants an end to the arms race, and precisely for that reason he cannot contemplate disengagement.*

Paradoxical though this statement sounds, a little reflection will show its soundness. The arms race is costly in manpower; but the presence of Russian garrisons in Central Europe does not add to Soviet military manpower requirements. Withdrawal, on the contrary, might place an additional burden on preparedness. If American military calculations are an indication of Soviet Russian defense thinking, then the present deployment is cheaper than the logistic preparations for possible re-entry in a wide area of disengagement. Disengagement, more-

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over, means a vast network of inspection and control personnel which the Russians are extremely reluctant to allow on their territory and that of their satellites. With modern arms and techniques, finally, the area of withdrawal can never be really "disengaged" so long as there has taken place no *political* disengagement between the two power blocs behind the withdrawal line. All this is so elementary it is almost useless to repeat to someone who refuses to "dig" it; armies can confront each other for a hundred years without firing a shot if the political conflicts between their countries have been settled; contrariwise, armies can be disengaged from each other as far as Ethiopia from Italy, and the distance will be no problem for an aggressor. *The real problem is not military but political disengagement, and the Russians are trying to persuade us that co-existence, or the recognition of the status quo, is the best way to achieve that.*

BOTH DISARMAMENT AND POLITICAL disengagement are being envisaged in the most serious part of the current negotiations: the debate on the control of atomic arms. The unconcealed aim of both Russia and Britain is to stop or prevent the nuclear armament of Germany. This purpose might be achieved by either or both of two methods: by declaring a permanent and general prohibition of atomic tests, thus closing the atomic club of three, or by designating a Central European area in which all such weapons would be prohibited. With the second method, America or NATO would be prohibited from installing pentomic units in Germany, but France might be left free to experiment with such weapons in the Sahara. Which of the two methods might be agreed upon depends on many factors, not the least being the possibility of control and inspection.

Much as an agreement to stop the tests is to be desired, it should be made clear that it does not mean disarmament in any true sense of the word. It would leave the big three in possession of their atomic stockpile and of the facilities to replenish and develop it; it would not diminish the danger of nuclear war one iota. It would stabilize the present balance of terror. No matter how far troops be withdrawn or "thinned out" east and west of a dividing line, care will be taken to maintain their relative strengths or equivalents, as the technical term goes. A prohibition of nuclear arms in Western Germany would relieve pressure which the Soviet Empire might have reason to fear one day; in exchange, the Kremlin might have to agree to some kind of inspection which would lift the iron curtain a little, as the Anglo-American negotiators desire. None of these possible arrangements, however, including the Rapacki and Eden plans which in themselves and at another time seemed to offer possibilities of relaxation, would now constitute disengagement or would make co-existence any less unpleasant. In the framework of the present negotiations each proposal is advanced to serve specific diplomatic needs of its sponsors; they are strictly self-serving.

If, however, such proposals to withdraw from Central Europe or to dissolve NATO or to accommodate the Russians in Berlin or to form

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bi-lateral councils with the East German puppet government on the basis of parity, are being presented as plans to "disengage," their authors are only half candid. What they would disengage seems to be the dangerous confrontation of hostile armies; but semi-consciously there is a connotation of a more ominous meaning: they would disengage themselves from the obligations and responsibilities which they feel are becoming a burden, maybe a danger to themselves. It is a tragic misunderstanding that the German socialists feel their boys are being trained as gun fodder for an American attack on Russia, that Mendès-France fears NATO is being misused to bolster up British positions, that the British feel their power is being sapped for the benefit of German unification and that Senator Mansfield should think this is an appropriate moment to campaign against foreign aid and against the mayor of Berlin, as though we did not have a common cause. We are faced with a neo-isolationism of the left which has forgotten the lessons of collective security. It is trying to shirk the burden of co-existence and to shove the responsibility for defending self-determination over to the United Nations. But the United Nations is nothing except the nations that stand behind it, and "let Hammarskjold do it" is no policy. Negotiating for the sake of negotiating may be a device, if one has a policy, but it is no policy either. If one engages in negotiations one must know, approximately at least, what one wants to achieve and what the other side may be ready to agree to. But most wishful is a policy of yielding to ultimatums that will result in nothing but more ultimatums. To negotiate is not to capitulate. The West might yield on many points of mere prestige, such as recognition of various governments now not recognized, provided it holds on to the substance, such as its rights in Berlin. If one sits down to negotiate, one expects an outcome which makes co-existence more tolerable—if not outright pleasant, then at least not more unpleasant than before.

P.S.—Two months after writing this, I still am sorry to see no silver lining on the horizon. Dulles died amidst mournful prayers by his worst enemies that a leader of equal character and strength might arise in the West. The foreign ministers have swapped invectives for a month and Khrushchev has put his German satellite on the map. A summit meeting of heads of state is likely to seal a test ban for nuclear arms largely on Russian terms, i.e., without inspection on a scale technically sufficient or politically desirable. The neutralist and isolationist opposition has been silenced momentarily, but the cold war is droning on. It has been my unfortunate function to warn of illusions in foreign affairs, and I still know of no gadget, device, panacea or unilateral action which could transport us from co-existence to co-operation. The way of negotiations is long, hard and uncertain, but failure carries the ultimate penalty. The rôle of an opposition under these circumstances is to watch that no means of peace is left untried, and in particular to assure the government that it needs to save people but not face, principles but not appearances, peace but not position papers.

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This article forms the second part of an extended study of American education. The first part, as well as a related article by Melvin Tumin, appeared in our previous (Spring 1959) issue; copies can still be had. We hope to return to this theme in forthcoming numbers. Our next issue, being a special number devoted to problems of American trade unionism, will not be available for this discussion; but after that our pages will be open to contributions which extend or challenge the material presented thus far.—EDITORS.

THE AMERICAN SCHOOL—II

Michael Walzer

I

The rhetoric of equality is a staple of American speech; we devoutly abstain, however, from planning the practice of equality. The amazingly rapid expansion of American education in the past fifty years is indeed an occasion for pride: *it is better that children be in school.* But it is not entirely—or necessarily—a democratic achievement; expansion has been hardly less rapid in undemocratic countries. Even as we survey the gains, we need to note the cunning survival of old, and the unlooked-for development of new, forms of inequality. In general, the survivals result from the lack of perspicacity, energy and system so characteristic of liberal reformers facing a *class* society, as well as from the eternal resourcefulness of privilege. The novelties are more likely the result of an apprehension of the needs of a *mass* society and its bureaucratic elite.

For the purposes of our examination, American schools can be roughly divided into those which are, in class terms, integrated and those which are socially "pure." The grossest inequality is obviously manifest in the latter, in the exclusiveness often enjoyed or endured by both upper and lower class children. That so much of the current debate centers upon the problems of schools already integrated reveals a surprising disinclination to face the most immediate educational problems. American school districts are organized geographically and in largest part financed locally; this means that insofar as the geography of our cities and countryside is a class geography, the schools—especially on the elementary level—will be socially unintegrated. It follows that they will be dilapidated or luxurious according to the state of the local economy. Our post-war school building program has been predictably spotty, hardly beginning work precisely in those areas where it is most needed. Despite the progress of consolidation and the possibility of

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federal loans, a large number of Americans attend schools understaffed by underpaid teachers, housed in buildings partially condemned or ugly, dirty and (often) unsafe. In surroundings such as these they quickly learn what one might think was the single intended lesson: that such as they need not dwell very long on the business of education. School does not long detain such children, and they have usually fled in spirit years before they escape in fact.

The "school retention rate" offers significant evidence of educational inequality in America today. This measurement indicates the holding power of the schools, or, conversely, the ability (or the willingness) of children to continue their education. From fifth grade to high school approximately 55 per cent of the student population is retained: of every 1,000 students in fifth grade in 1946–47 only 553 graduated high school in 1954. Although the number of students leaving school is highest in the two years directly before graduation, it is actually rather evenly distributed over all the years after sixth-grade: thus a considerable number of children never get beyond grade school; many more drop out during junior high school years.[1]

But these figures by themselves tell only a small part of the story: for school retention is not at all evenly distributed among social classes. Precisely how it is distributed is more difficult to discover. We may assume that retention through high school, being 100 per cent among upper class children, and probably not too far from that among the middle classes, must drop radically among the children of unskilled workers, slum dwellers, agricultural laborers, new immigrants, etc.—for otherwise a national retention rate of 55 per cent is hardly explicable. Such sociological surveys as are available confirm this, indicating, for example, that in families whose income is below the national average some 30 per cent of those students *whose indicated capacity is sufficient for college work,* fail to finish high school.[2] School retention through college similarly follows class lines: a study by Elmo Roper among high school graduates found that only 20.5 per cent of the sons of factory workers applied for admission to college; among the sons of men in professional or executive positions the figure was 73.4 per cent. College acceptance rates showed a similar bias, though it was far less extreme.[3] The children of different classes, of course, apply to different colleges; most working class students who go to college at all move on to state teachers' colleges, junior colleges, or the smaller technical institutes.

School retention figures, it should be noted, have been showing a steady improvement for over half a century; the rate of this improvement appears, however, to have slowed down in recent years. It is possible that the "revolution" in American secondary education is nearing its close (in the colleges, perhaps, it is only beginning). Although the number of high school students will continue to rise—automatically with the birth rate—the social range of the school may already have been extended to its "natural" limits, that is, to limits set by the comparative political and economic powerlessness of the groups still beyond the pale. To be beyond the pale does not mean that one does not get

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an education, but rather that one's education is incomplete, is experienced as something to be resisted and avoided, and is provided at the hands of teachers who often imagine themselves—whether in the spirit of idealism or of cynicism—to be in exile. Between such teachers, usually recruited from the middle classes, and the children they must teach there arise the most fundamental and difficult problems of communication.

To SOME EXTENT, such problems—and the attendant forms of social conflict—are not avoidable, though there is never any excuse for requiring that they be wrestled with amid generally depressing surroundings and a pervasive sense of hopelessness. *That* at least is only a matter of money, and any serious program for dealing with our educational problems must make that money available. Still, if opportunity is to be offered to the children of working class and new immigrant communities, it is inevitable that radical differences be confronted, that the children come to know an unaccustomed world. An education for social opportunity is surely conceivable which is not also a subtle training in invidious distinction; but this will involve careful thought and communal planning. As a start: confrontation must be made with the child as the member of a social group. Individuals will never climb freely out of the group (or freely choose to remain) until the group as a whole has been raised to a new level of intellectual consciousness. If education can somehow be made a communal rather than a purely individual enterprise, then it will be possible to build upon an existing cultural base and not merely to uproot the bright and the aggressive and send them upon their American way. The school must seek contacts, and it must establish them (surely) in the language of the child and of his peers—even while insisting upon its own standards and values. Perhaps New York's experiment with the "all-day neighborhood school" suggests a beginning. But it is likely that these problems would be more satisfactorily dealt with in a class-integrated school.

The dangers of segregation are best viewed in the vocational high school. Whether or not the atmosphere is that of the *Blackboard Jungle* —most often it is not—these schools provide what can only be called a training in limitation. In part this is even a vocational limitation, for the more exotic programs in fields like aviation or beauty culture hardly make for a very broad range of employment possibilities. More important, however, is another kind of limitation: a more or less intentional restriction in the scope of the student's social and cultural acquaintance. The vocational high school fails to cultivate a wide-open sense of the possible. And that, after all, is the major problem. Prolonged and often smug discussions as to the "limited" capacities of the children involved are really irrelevant. It is always worthwhile to *experiment* with those capacities. Training children of 14 and 15 for skilled labor is hardly necessary; that can come later, perhaps on the

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job. The child ought to be "wasting" these interim years with an inventive and imaginative education in history, literature and science.

II

Probably most American high schools are socially integrated, though this may mean no more than that they include a fairly wide middle class range, losing the children of both social extremes. In such schools educational problems are somewhat different from those discussed above. It is possible first of all to attract better and happier teachers (there is, however, a frightening "attraction" in slum schools as well, for some teachers enjoy the comparative freedom from parental supervision and aspiration, and the opportunity to maintain an overt, stern, and sometimes para-military discipline). It is possible, secondly, to offer a wider range of subjects, academic as well as commercial and vocational, and to provide some semblance of a liberal education. What is most important, however, is the simple fact of social confrontation in the school; its possibilities may well include hostility and mutual avoidance as well as tolerance and friendship, but either of these seems better than isolation: in this case a similar principle should govern the social treatment of class and racial differences. The recognition of difference, though not always or even often its abolition, must be made a basic goal of democratic education. This suggests a significant argument, repeated below, against overly rigid sectioning or the siphoning off of talent.

These are the possibilities—long explored in this country—of what the English call a "comprehensive" school. But it must be said that these are possibilities only rarely realized. In socially integrated schools participation in carefully differentiated programs leading toward fairly explicit careers has tended to follow class lines; and then comprehension becomes little more than formal co-existence. It is only in the lower-middle classes—to use Lloyd Warner's terms (and his figures)—that approximately equal numbers of students opt for, or are guided into, the commercial-vocational program and the academic curriculum. Among upper-middle class students the figures in a Yankee City high school were 12 per cent for the first and 88 per cent for the second; among upper-lower class students the figures were 72 per cent and 28 per cent respectively.[4] There is no evidence available to indicate any significant change in these divisions since Warner's work. They probably demonstrate certain general truths about American high schools. Surely no one who has recently spent any time in an average school can fail to be aware that *the vocational and commercial programs on the one hand and the academic on the other are simply the names behind which different social classes receive their education and discover their divergent destinies.*

It has sometimes been suggested, not always tongue-in-cheek, that high school athletic programs are the most democratic features of American secondary education: football has even carried racial integration into the south. Talent tells on the field more immediately, pos-

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sibly more decisively, than in the classroom. This is probably true because a common set of cultural tastes and aspirations stands behind American athletics, while learning is still culturally divisive. Athletics, to put it crudely, has become a part of mass culture, and motivation toward athletic achievement a matter of massive indoctrination; learning is still a part of class culture, its pursuit dependent upon family encouragement and pressure. The outcome of the current crisis in education may well be to alter the last half of this discouraging proposition: to make at least scientific achievement a common cultural aspiration and to increase the degree of talent selection and reward. Such a result would have to be judged in terms of its effects upon the unselected, as well as in terms of the definition and uses of talent. As for the first of these, it might be worthwhile to point out that the social effect of democratic selection on the basis of extraordinary athletic talent has been the slow erosion of activity and participation among the untalented. But this distinction, at least, is no longer based on social class.

The possibilities for individual mobility are probably the major virtues of a class-integrated school today. The 28 per cent of Warner's upper-lower class sample who chose an academic program and perhaps went on to a college of some sort were socially mobile, aspiring upwards. Some modern sociologists suggest that the discovery of such individuals is virtually the only task of the school: a push for the first-born, a smiling and presumably socializing glance at the stolid unmoving mass. High school principals often acknowledge that such is their mission; they nudge students into a suitable place in the school program and this is a foretaste of the process by which they will someday be adjusted to their position in society at large. Many educators are quite frank about discouraging expectations in students who in their opinion are likely to be frustrated later on. Frustration is recognized not only as a personal problem, but also as a social danger.

Such a selection as the high schools claim to make, however, can rarely be made on the basis of talent alone; despite the plethora of tests, talent remains chiefly an attribute of performance, and the judgment of performance, as well as performance itself, is a matter of manners and mores. "The judgment of ability," write Havighurst and his associates, "is primarily a social class judgment and those children who conform to middle-class standards [are said to] have ability." Learning to be middle-class and not merely learning mathematics or history is obviously an important element in upward mobility. And insofar as this particular skill is family-taught, the educational system serves as "a mechanism which helps perpetuate our class order."[5]

III

In the years before the launching of Sputnik our schools were in the process of shaping their curriculums to fit the needs of a mass society. This process parallels, complicates and to a limited degree undercuts the effort to maintain class distinctions which has just been described.

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The essential purpose of the new education, a group of its apostles have argued, is "to build common cultural backgrounds that many homes no longer supply." The school thus self-consciously assumes many of the educational tasks of the family, in effect short-circuiting an older learning process in which the student's cultural and moral directions were most often supplied by his parents. Since the class system is, at its socially most significant level, a system of family relationships, the newer educational processes tend to soften any very precise sense of class distinction. To a degree, the family is no longer able to send into the school a child already conscious of his social position, already filled with a particular set of attitudes and aspirations.

This construction of a "common culture" is enhanced by that broader trend which is slowly transforming a society oriented to production into a society absorbed in consumption. Insofar as the student is still trained for productive activity, for "opportunity" in the old sense of that word, invidious distinctions prevail; family expectations, class manners and mores guide the student toward a kind of manifest destiny. Consumption in America today tends to be more homogeneous: expectations and taste are not governed by the family but created outside it. The young child, recognized as a consumer, is appealed to through the mass media—and with this appeal the family often cannot compete. Indeed, father and mother, instead of themselves supplying the cultural images and values of their children, will often succumb to the child's more "educated," more contemporary, sense of the appropriate and fashionable.

It is not, however, in the school that the child attains his education in the appropriate; it is rather from a host of external influences, among which the mass media are increasingly important. For the discovery of the child as a consumer has proven one of Madison Avenue's major inspirations. Assiduously followed up, it has resulted in the creation of a new, more or less homogeneous teen-age culture in America. The ever-present need for some sort of cultural unity has been filled by men who stood to gain by pitching its level low enough to maximize the immediate sale of cultural commodities. The process is not conspiratorial; it is the natural adjustment of salesman and customer. In the world of culture, however, one might well wish at least to supplement this with the relationship of teacher and student. If that relationship is more authoritative, it is at the same time less manipulative; and it can be a relationship of deep mutual respect.

The new teen-age culture no longer supports the work of the school as did the older middle-class training in work and aspiration. The product of this training was the man David Riesman called "inner-directed," a man whose experience of authority and love in the family had fitted him, once he had left the home, to face the world as an individual. In the absence of such a man, it becomes imperative that the school itself be capable of "inner-direction," that it discover value in its curriculum and confront its students with this value. Both their resistance and their acceptance, it should be noted, will then be salutary.

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In the past the American school has supplied some such direction to those of its students, at least, who were preparing for college. It has done so, however, in such an unimaginative and crotchety fashion, and with such an extraordinary absence of enthusiasm or concern, as to endanger the very idea of direction in learning. Since World War II, the trend in education has been steadily away from the "inner-directed" school. Educators have moved—despite an inevitable, and one would think a fortunate, inertia in the system—to fit the schools to the needs of the increasingly socialized child, and through him to the needs of society.

"IT WOULD SEEM not to require proof that education at any time and in any society should in its character and purposes conform to the dominant ideals as to form of organization held by that society."[6] Thus wrote the director of an American college of education in 1952. But neither this man nor any of his colleagues would acknowledge conformity alone as a goal of education. Political and social adjustment, they would probably insist, is only the means to personal happiness. The greatest happiness of the greatest number remains the goal of educators calling themselves liberals and progressives. Unimpressed with the history of social change, very much impressed with the contemporary mechanics of socialization, they seek quite consciously to break down any lingering, recalcitrant "inner direction" in order to develop the student's "adaptive flexibility" and to expand his "frustration tolerance." The happiness to which such a training points is the contentment of the bland, a kind of friendly mindlessness. The student *reacts,* as does the school: his is a passive nature, oriented mainly to the consumption of pleasure; the school's role tends increasingly to become passive, aimed at a training in the pleasures of consumption.

The school is more and more able to assume that the buying of goods and services is the most universal human experience. Consumption, appreciation and use: here are a new trio of human "needs" which the school, in its more modern moments, seeks to fulfill. A kind of self-salesmanship and a perennial patriotism round out what may well pass for an education. These presumed "needs" of the child, which are also the anticipated requirements of society, received classical expression in an extremely important book published by the National Educational Association in 1944 (revised edition, 1952) entitled *Education for ALL American Youth.* In the order in which they there appear—their expression is shortened but not caricatured—these are the ten "needs of youth" which the school is to meet:

1. To develop salable skills.
2. To maintain good health and physical fitness.
3. To understand the rights and duties of citizenship.
4. To understand the significance of the family for the individual and for society.
5. To learn how to buy goods and services.

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6. To understand the influence of science on human life.
7. To develop an appreciation of literature, art, music and nature.
8. To be able to use leisure time well and to budget it wisely.
9. To develop respect for other persons.
10. To grow in the ability to think rationally.

Now it is obvious that the fulfillment of most of these "needs" is the normal outcome of an education in history, literature, and science —supplemented as it must be by subsequent vocational or professional training. The authors of the NEA book, however, seek to wring from such subjects a more immediate gain than genuine learning is able to offer. Instead of approaching problems in taste, personal choice and political duty through an established, authoritative body of knowledge, they tend to fragmentize the old curriculum and to present instead a series of problem-solving lessons. This is already apparent in the approach to literature recommended by the NEA: "some of the best things ever said on the solution of students' personal problems were written by poets, novelists and dramatists." Similarly, history is no longer to be studied "for its own sake," but rather "for the sake of becoming a good practicing citizen."

In undertaking to solve personal problems and to train the student in the practices of citizenship, educators are all too likely to forget their primary duties. They appear to move in frenzied circles attempting to teach everything, responding with unreflecting enthusiasm to each new "need": the reaction to Sputnik is only a more newsworthy example. One of the results of this enthusiasm has been a proliferation of courses in the high school, a phenomenon especially noticeable in those new schools which have been able to plan for the needs of *all* their students. This proliferation is perhaps not a necessary evil, even if it does absorb, as some critics have alleged, a considerable portion of a narrowly limited amount of educational time. Both young children and teen-agers have, in fact, a great deal of time—time enough to learn to dance, to drive a car, to play football, to train for a vocation; even—hopefully—time enough for unorganized play and unplanned idleness. The danger to education is only significant when any of these activities achieves intellectual parity with traditional academic subjects. But today this danger is a very real one. The incongruous series has long been a device of satire; it has now become a source of moral confusion in the curriculum, a confusion only occasionally funny.

In a textbook on secondary education published seven years ago by the head of the College of Education at a large mid-western university there appears a list of problems which the school curriculum, so the text implies, should be designed to solve. The problems are classified under various heads: some are personal: "How can I become more attractive? . . . What causes pimples? . . . Is God a person? . . . Am I normal?"; some are political: "How can we keep fascism and com-

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munism out of this country? . . . What is a fascist? A communist?"[7] This is the occasional humor of moral confusion. Its author is, let us hope, an educator with but few faithful pupils; yet his spirit is very much abroad. The immediate difficulty is that it is an ostensibly democratic spirit. The attack upon importance and the critique of value mask themselves in the language of equalitarianism. In the curriculum itself many educators now insist upon the equal significance of all subjects; they campaign against invidious comparisons between vocational and academic programs, against the snobbery so frequently learned along with Latin or physics or higher mathematics. They seek to repeat a lesson which has recently been written into many elementary school primers: that policeman and milkman, doctor and lawyer, factory worker and business administrator all are equally "helpful" members of society. This is true enough so far as the men themselves are concerned, though it is a trivial basis for human brotherhood. But the various kinds of *knowledge* required and used by one and the other man are not equal, nor should the school pretend that they are.

One of America's most influential writers on education, James B. Conant, has suggested that the schools should seek to reduce the "visibility" of social and economic (and intellectual) differences. He has argued that all education is essentially vocational, that history, foreign languages and physics serve career purposes no less than do workshop and commercial English. If this view were widely accepted, the prestige of the liberal arts and sciences would be effectively reduced. But this would be obfuscation and not equality. *The true goal of educational equality is to make available to all students who are in any way capable or learning a single heritage of knowledge in art and science. In relationship to this heritage all vocational training—however necessary and beneficial—is extra-curricular.*

A false equalitarianism of ideas and purposes leaves the school utterly unable to choose among the myriad demands made upon it. It responds instead to the greatest pressure, and it is not the needs of individuals but the requirements of society which prevail. The shift from one to another is perfectly illustrated by the facile rhetoric of Herold C. Hunt, Under-secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, speaking to a conference on education in 1955: "It is a root belief in a democracy that the school must help fit the individual for his place in society. The schools, therefore, must help answer the needs of society . . ." Hunt called for better selection of talented students; this he described as the "conservation of intellectual resources."[8] The schools, however, can do more than this; for it is not only the talented who must serve. "The secondary school must accept its responsibility to help youth prepare for the armed services just as its gives help in preparation for other careers." This was the demand of the NEA in a special preface to the revised edition of *Education for ALL American Youth.* "To this end every secondary school which has not already done so should conduct a realistic study of young men's special military needs . . . The curriculum should include appropriate knowledge and skills of

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value in preparing for military service... The secondary school may or may not assume responsibility for any actual military training..." *May or may not:* the leading body of American teachers was not sure whether or not military training had a place in the high school program.

IV

There has been in recent years a significant effort to develop a common learning (a "core" curriculum) which might serve as a balance to an education whose weight was slowly shifting toward the vocational or the merely casual. This common learning has centered upon English and the social studies; it has been designed to meet not the specific needs for vocational skills and techniques, but the more general needs of citizenship and consumption.

As reported in a bouncy and enthusiastic book, *New Schools for a New Culture* (revised edition, 1953), describing the reputedly excellent core program of Evanston Township High School, this new common learning requires a "greater emphasis . . . on people and less on subject matter as such . . . on appreciation rather than analysis, on the contemporary as an increasingly important area of study, on the psychology of learning rather than the logic of subject matter." Given this intellectual (or rather anti-intellectual) orientation, it is inevitable that the same processes of fragmentation, trivialization and false equalization which had affected the peripheral areas of learning should now be introduced into the center. The problem-solving approach, which breaks down subject matter into particles of useful advice and bits of "skill," is the key agent of this erosion of learning. In the Evanston program "consideration is given to real life situations which pupils now face and which will continue to confront them . . . personality adjustment, group relations and the personal factors of success and progress." In thus confronting real life, knowledge is appropriated before it is learned; it is grabbed with an eye for the useful, the comforting and the exciting.

In a book on "life adjustment" education published in 1952, just one year after the US Office of Education gave the new ideology semi-official status, an educator already quoted above described the new technique:[9]

> What holds a family together? What would happen to an individual cut off from a family unit throughout life? What causes conflict with those we sincerely love? Why do two persons who marry so often fail to understand one another? These are the kinds of questions important in everyday life that imaginative literature like *Cheaper By the Dozen, Anna Karenina,* and *Mama's Bank Account* can raise in pupils' minds and they give the background for practical courses.

Somewhat in this fashion (the educational "functionalism" of the book on Evanston is slightly more sophisticated) does the unprincipled appropriation of material lead to a radical devaluation of that same material. The new equality is thus an equality of books and ideas without value. And the result of this devaluation is once again to leave

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the school helpless in its confrontation with the world of politics and commerce. The admission of the cold war into the classroom, whether in the form of actual military preparation or political propaganda, is paralleled by the admission of commercial culture in the form of the Hollywood movie, the best-seller, the corner-store magazine.

THIS EDUCATIONAL DEFEATISM is related to the secret opinion many educators seem to have of democracy: they believe that it is not possible but that it can be counterfeited by a kind of ruse. The common learning is often one form of this ruse; the pseudo-ethic of cooperation and consensus is another. (In some genuinely progressive schools, it should be said, the core curriculum represents an extremely valuable experiment in teaching method and involves very little tampering with content.) A bulletin of the US Office of Education (No. 22, 1951) first made clear the nature of the trick. It was devoted to an examination of the "neglected sixty per cent" of American students; of the other forty per cent, presumably, half are prepared for college and half are provided with technical skills. Neither of these courses are really possible for the "neglected sixty": "reading to comprehend newspapers and magazines reasonably well" is considered a worthy aim for them. Nor is this seen as any cause for sorrow: it is "in fact fortunate," says an article in the *Bulletin* of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, "for a society having a large number of jobs to be done requiring no unusual aptitudes or interests" that so many children exist who have neither "aroused interests or pronounced aptitudes." These children too must be formed into citizens and consumers, though hardly by a process which will help them to make intelligent and rational choices. Their democratic right to an education is transformed into the inescapable duty of society to provide them with the appearance of knowledge.

"We shall be denying educational opportunity to many people," wrote the President's Committee on Higher Education, "as long as we maintain the present orientation of higher education toward verbal skills and intellectual interests." This is sheer ruse; translated it means: "We shall be depriving children of the right to go to school unless we can find some way of not educating them once they are there." Finding such a way is often a task which absorbs all the ingenuity of writers on education. Thus the author of one of the better texts on building the high school curriculum suggests such "instructional units" as Managing Money, Family Living, Prejudice, Learning to Enjoy and Appreciate Literature, How to Apply for a Job, Physics in the Kitchen.[10] Another text describes a "new" English program oriented towards: 1) letter-writing, 2) oral discussion, 3) daily speech needs, 4) interviewing, 5) group discussion, 6) conversation.[11] Everyday problems indeed!

Such suggestions from educators are frightening enough; it is somewhat comforting to know that schools are usually "reactionary" about implementing them. The school's adjustment to the mass media themselves is probably more rapid, however, than to the programs of these

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educated middle-men of cultural levelling. Many educational textbooks today advocate a teaching program in listening and watching (just as many more urge an education in buying). Such a training, they suggest, would enable men to become "intelligent users" of the mass media. There is something of ruse here also, for the noun and adjective are wedded too hastily. An intelligent man might, after all, choose *not* to use the mass media, and intelligence at any rate precedes use and does not merely modify it.

A more realistic argument, not so much for a training in television-watching, as for the use of material from the mass media, is offered by those who would seek to make contact with students "on their own level," and to knit together their school-learning with what they learn on their own. This is something like stooping to conquer and is justifiable if one does not stoop too low—and if one remembers to conquer.

The essence of the democratic ruse is the equality of subject matter (stooping, then, is *really* as good as conquering). But this is supplemented by a spurious equality of persons, achieved through an odd and disturbing sort of group harmony. The general effort of the new education to shape students into adjustable citizens is made real in the school by joining the student to an interdependent, cooperating group. The purpose of this is indicated in a list of aims set forth by the writers on Evanston High School; under the heading "Social Adjustment" appears the following: "Learning to make common decisions concerning common problems, not by compromise, but by consensus, the democratic process." Differences of opinion, the authors continue, are never real; the school should "discourage controversy, encourage fact-finding." One of the critics of the new learning has rightly pointed out that in this world of consensus the individual who holds a minority view "is treated like a backward child who must be brought to see the light . . . permanent disagreement is never tolerated." It is the essential characteristic of spurious equalitarianism that it does not recognize respect, tolerance or conflict as possible relationships of equal men, but only agreement and resemblance. This attitude in our schools, re-enforced a hundred times from the outside, is perhaps the greatest existing threat to that other—that genuine—equalitarianism for which socialists yearn.

V

Against the trend in educational thinking sketched above must be set the recent, largely post-Sputnik demands for renewed rigor in the training of the talented student. This is a reaction of the men of the right: first, of those who nostalgically defend tradition and authority in education; secondly, of those who toughmindedly look out for the best interests of the Pentagon. With the conservatives of the first group (Hutchins, Bestor, Arendt) radicals are likely to discover certain limited areas of agreement, at least agreement as to criticism of the *status quo*. The second group, which advocates an elitist training in technical and scientific skills, must be resolutely opposed. Its members are, in fact, not conservatives at all, but the most advanced de-

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fenders of the interests of an increasingly well-established power elite. Perhaps that is why their proposals would tend to make American education look more like Russian.

Elitism is the natural, perhaps the inevitable, concomitant of mass education. A complex industrial and military establishment could hardly be maintained with the personnel produced by the new learning. They would—to be blunt—not know enough, and while knowledge may not yet be the equivalent of power, it has never been so necessary to the powerful. The state, then, must reach into the masses to recruit its military and administrative bureaucracies. The bright child is recognized as a national resource. And this resource must be exploited: the vein of talent in the masses—often enough overlooked in the past—will have to be mined. Shafts are sunk so that talent can be discovered and brought to the surface. Early testing, guidance programs, the national defense scholarships—these are so many shafts for the mining of talent.

It is quite possible that the current "crisis" will increase the possibilities of upward mobility through the educational system. Elitism ought not to be confused with a simple re-enforcement of the surviving class distinctions. The commitment to discover talent wherever it can be found is genuine enough. Already there is a tendency in educational writing to pay more attention to the gifted individual, even if he is a non-conforming individual. And surely in an America which has tended of late to dissipate its vulgar energy, the spectacle of young men "on the make" is not entirely disheartening. At least self-aggrandizement, whatever else it requires, involves activity, work and study and these probably necessitate a temporary break in continual consumer titillation.

There is a tendency, however, not to leave self-aggrandizement to chance. Instead, the talented student is to be *guided* into his new social position (which will be no less a niche for being a higher niche than that to which he is accustomed). The most serious educational suggestion of the elitists is the early selection and segregation of the gifted student. Surrounded by his equals, he will presumably be able to move more quickly and to study more difficult subjects. His fellow-citizens being in fact only the masses he will someday govern—or whose governors he will advise—there is, it follows, no reason for him to associate with them. He will shortly become a familiar in a different world; if *Life* had its way, he would shortly speak a different language. On his own, he will be far more efficiently prepared for his future: tested, selected and guided; later, perhaps, tested again, watched and advised.

The major arguments against the segregation of the talented have been presented with great persuasiveness by Bruno Bettelheim in a recent issue of *Commentary*. Only a single point will be emphasized here. The elitists, for all their attacks upon mass education and its advocates often manifest a *similar* impulse toward educational segregation. They share a firm sense of the virtues of homogeneity. They believe that children learn best in limited worlds, whether these limits are defined by the child's own experience or by his tested aptitudes. For the masses this may mean the substitution of a sickly pap for the in-

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congruities of Mother Goose and the wickedness of Aesop's Fables. Or it may mean a commitment to study history only insofar as it can be put to practical use in solving community problems. But the training of the talented is likely to be narrowed in no less significant ways: first, because the national investment will probably require specialization at an early age so that a return can be shown as rapidly as possible; secondly, because the confrontation with difference should be an important part of education; and thirdly, because the snobbery which elitism can hardly fail to sanction is itself a human limitation.

FINALLY, A THREEFOLD set of suggestions. First, the most immediate and most important educational task remains the attack upon class barriers. Major work must still be done, and not only in slums and the poorer agricultural districts where such work should inevitably begin. For the subtle tenacity of class is manifest even in our better high schools with their two-highway system, and even (or especially) in the new, extravagantly modern and luxurious vocational schools. Secondly, a genuinely democratic education is ultimately a matter of what is taught. We require a major rethinking of our curriculum, and eventually a (tentative, latitudinarian) redefinition of that body of knowledge which we value so highly that we would impose it upon every child. Thirdly, if the commitment to a common learning is genuine, then it must be accompanied by radical experiment with the methods of education. Perhaps this is the true test of a democracy: that a way be found to confront all its children with cultural excellence and to win from all of them an intelligent and active response. The least that can be said is that educators today have not had faith enough in the possibility of success.

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1 U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, *Statistical Summary of Education*, 1953-54, p. 10. Also previous editions of the *Summary*.
2 Warner, Havighurst, Loeb, *Who Shall be Educated: The Challenge of Unequal Opportunities*, 1944, p. 52.
3 Roper, *Factors Affecting the Admission of High School Seniors to College*, 1949, p. 17, 1943.
4 Warner, *et. al.*, p. 61.
5 *Ibid.*, p. 76-7.
6 Douglas, *Secondary Education for Life Adjustment of American Youth*, 1952, p. 58.
7 *Ibid.*, pp. 81-3.
8 *Selection and Guidance of Gifted Students for National Survival*, Report of the 20th Educational Conference, New York City, October, 1955.
9 Douglas, p. 345.
10 Romine, *Building the High School Curriculum*, 1954, *passim*.
11 Carlsen, "Life Adjustment Through English," in Douglas, ed., *Education for Life Adjustment*, 1950, pp. 94-96.

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ADVANCED INTELLECTUALS— AND BACKWARD COUNTRIES

Suzanne Labin

Traditionally Marxism has claimed to be a carrier of progress beyond the attainment of capitalism. The argument ran: Capitalism, having reached its summit, is weighed down with internal contradictions. At this point, the proletariat, matured by long apprenticeship in capitalist techniques, takes over and leads society to new heights.

The reality has been otherwise. Those who most religiously adhered to this doctrine were never able to take power except in countries where industry was minimal, where there was hardly a bourgeoisie or a proletariat, and where economic and social life were at a very low level. The larger consequences of this fact do not here concern us. What interests me is one of its more incongruous by-products: the passion of the "advanced" intellectuals for undeveloped countries.

Until recently the heroes of "progressivism"—those who despise the West because it retards the Historical Process—were heart and soul for the muzhik's Russia. But lately their horizon has expanded. As Russia becomes more industrialized, they turn toward China, Burma, Syria and Egypt.

Marx, Engels and the early socialists focused their attention upon the most highly-developed countries, England, France and America. Living on the crest of civilization's wave, they were passionately concerned with political and technological improvements. But the Communists have changed all that. They get their illumination from the countries with the fewest light bulbs.

Hoisting aloft the flag of historical determinism, they declare that any political superstructure is no more than a reflection of the economic infrastructure. Thereupon these archangels of progress salute the Communist regimes which managed to establish themselves only in countries with primitive infrastructures. Conclusion: either the Communist superstructure of these countries, as a true reflection, is also primitive and then it becomes necessary to strip away its "progressive" halo; or the superstructure is not a true reflection and out goes the determinist theory.

Nor does Sputnik dissolve this dilemma. The passion of the "progressive" intellectuals for Russia was born 25 years ago, at a time when the country had nothing but primitive economic structures. And—it is noteworthy—as the USSR has grown industrially, the enthusiasm of the "progressives" has been steadily displaced upon China, Indonesia, Syria, where the economic structures are at best those of capitalism a century ago.

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Besides, when I speak of infrastructure I mean, in good Marxist parlance, that which promotes the general improvement of the means of production and consequently of popular consumption. The launching of the satellite, though a remarkable achievement, has not changed the lot of the masses of Soviet workers. It is well to remember that there are still quarters in Moscow without running water or gas, where women carry water from a fountain in the street and cook over charcoal. In the spirit of Marx, luxury articles, among which we may certainly include the Sputnik, are of no account in defining an infrastructure.

Industrialization Without Emancipation

The Communist regimes pretend to pull underdeveloped countries out of their rut and to carry them past the stage of capitalism, directly into the most advanced forms of political and social life.

This claim cannot stand up against the facts. The truth is that Communist regimes in backward countries do strongly confirm the Marxist hypothesis of a correspondence between governmental forms and economic substrata: I mean that these forms are regressive, that they enslave—they do not liberate—the people.

In reality these regimes serve up traditional despotism with a modern sauce, substituting parties for courts and slogans for bibles. Their deepest purpose is the same as that of all counter-revolutions: to extinguish the individual's conscious participation in his destiny until he is reduced to the level of a thing.

Nor do I use the term "counter-revolution" for exotic rhetorical effect. I mean it in a rigorous sense. Our century is indeed dominated by a revolution, and its name is industry. The industrial surge has the value of a true revolution because it tends considerably to increase the well-being, education, initiative, freedom—in short, the power—of the masses. Before the irresistible force of industry, no country can long stand still. But industrial revolution, urged on by social reform, elevates the humble and thereby threatens political absolutism. Hence, the Communist need to pour industry into bureaucratic molds so rigid that there will be no danger that the advance of industry will free the masses. And for this police formula, the underdeveloped countries lend themselves admirably.

Communists liquidate the bourgeoisie not, as they pretend and too many simpletons believe, because it slows down technological growth, but because, at least in its modern democratic form, the bourgeoisie does allow this expansion to yield the masses some benefit. The traditional method of Communism is to install technology without extending satisfactions, to unleash science without freeing the mind, to industrialize without liberating. That makes it a *counter-revolution.*

This fact might by now have been noticed by the "progressive" intellectuals of the advanced countries if the manias of ideology did not keep them from looking at facts. And the facts, in Communist countries, are that steel production increases as man's condition deteriorates, that the pitiable unrealized "plans" are enforced by pitiless whips, that Sputnik carries a dog into outer space but man on earth remains in chains.

In the countries that so fascinate our "advanced" intellectuals, backwardness is not merely a relic of the

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past. Because of Communist tyranny, it is the present lot of these countries and their prospect for at least the near future. And—a final irony—the members of the "progressive" intelligentsia travel to the antipodes where semi-literates oppress illiterates, looking for a program and a banner, while it is precisely in the Western nations which they inhabit and daily revile that these might be found.

Not everything in the West, to be sure, tends toward human freedom; but we are moving in that direction. A true progressive movement, animated by free socialist reformers, is engaged in dignifying labor. A true science, sustained by free research and studying man as well as nature, is planting the seeds of a more prodigious harvest than Sputnik can, because here it will benefit individuals as well as governments. Progress does take place in the West because there is freedom, while in the East it is vanishing because dictators hold sway. Yet the "progressive" intellectuals are resolutely cold to whatever moves forward and seduced by everything in regression.

Let me add that my purpose is not to dissuade anyone from becoming interested in backward countries. No human adventure, no social experiment should leave us indifferent. It is not necessary to take a Communist or "progressivist" position in order to be concerned about these countries; all one needs is a heart and a mind. But the interest which we, free people of the West, have in underdeveloped countries is entirely apart from the fanaticism which accompanies the writings of the "progressive" intellectuals. We are moved by the efforts that some countries are making to rise out of their ancient stagnation. (Nor need this mean only China and the USSR, since plenty of other countries in Asia and Africa have made impressive social progress accompanied by somewhat less bloodshed and uproar.) But emotion is not the same as devotion, and giving help does not mean that we should deify those we help.

A Marxist Key to Communist Intellectuals

Let's be fair. Not all the Communist intellectuals look toward Asia because it contains the type of country which begins to develop only under a bloody regime. They believe that the experiments which fascinate them derive from a genuinely advanced aspiration.

Yes but . . . Do not these people cite passages from Marx to the effect that ideologues always transpose class interests, all unknowingly and in the rosiest of colors? The eighteenth century philosophers, for example, believed they were bringing enlightenment, but were actually defending the bourgeoisie. Why then should not this method of analysis be applied to the very people who brandish it so readily?

To ask this question is to suggest the answer: the ideologies of the Communist intelligentsia express the class interest of . . . the Communist intelligentsia. When attempting to vindicate their politics in the West, the "progressive" intellectuals emphasize Historical Process. When glorifying the events of the East, they talk the language of Power. But these apparently contradictory arguments are rooted in the same motivation: not love of a doctrine but hatred of the bourgeoisie.

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Now I am not passing judgment on either the bourgeoisie or on hate. If I were, it would become obvious that one might inspire the other. What concerns me is the basis for the behavior of the Communist intellectuals. One cannot accept their statements that they hate the bourgeoisie because it exploits the masses, since they themselves revere bureaucracies that exploit the masses a hundred times more. One must therefore conclude that their animosity is aroused by the fact that bourgeois democracy does not give them the political role to which they aspire.

Underdeveloped countries are those which have not been educated by a large and active liberal intelligentsia. These countries are like voids which the Communist intellectuals can fill. They are countries that offer a ready market for credos, since people starved for material goods are gluttons for ersatz spiritual goods and consequently for ideologies and prophecies. In underdeveloped countries, the future is as rich in formulas as the past is poor in achievement. They always reap the fullest harvest of messianic sermons. And here the Communist intellectuals can thrive.

The example of Voltaire and Catherine II confirms this law. The contributions of Voltaire's vigorous mind were not approved by an ancient French society stuffed with traditions, but his light was accepted in the faintly illuminated North, where a despot, free from the shackles of an ancient civilization, could smile prettily at his theories. *The elite of the word tries to establish its ascendancy where there is no elite of any other kind.*

However, one must introduce into this interpretation an important fact. Voltaire knew that the reality which Catherine II covered with a philosophical wig would have had very little room for his diversions. In the same way, the first impulse of the "progressive" Western intellectuals is to believe that in the Communist regimes they will at last be able to play the role of ideological mentor which bourgeois society has refused them. But upon reflection, in their secret hearts, they know that this is not true. They know that these regimes will use them as propagators of lies rather than creators of ideals.

It is only in the West that the "progressive" phraseology of our Communist intellectuals can endow them with a certain prestige without obliging them to lick boots. Precisely because these countries are the most advanced, even in their political structure, they can easily maintain their equanimity in the face of subversive strutting and heroic posturing.

The last point in the argument of the protocommunist intellectuals is the following: Let us say to the western world where we are living that it is decadent, especially since it loves this decadence; in the absence of levers of power, we wrest prestige from it; and, since power is inaccessible to us, we cannot sustain our enthusiasm with the example of our works. Therefore, let us hail as our champion the Communist world of Russia and China which promises to apply our theories, and let us try to convince ourselves that they will do it . . . *but at a distance.* For it is noteworthy that one never sees any of these "progressive" mountebanks abandon the "decadent" circles of Paris to live in the "inspiring" forums of Peking or Kharkov.

So the Marxist system has helped

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us at least to explain the people who exploit it. And the explanation, to sum up, is this: the "progressive" intellectuals attach themselves not to highly developed regimes but to those regimes which most easily allow them to consider themselves progressive.

Cooks Who Fall Into the Pot

The "progressive" intellectuals justify their fixation upon underdeveloped countries by citing the marvelous future which the historical process reserves to them. Notice that this justification implies the strange axiom that advanced countries are not included in the historical process. Only the Communist dictators have access to Progress or History, and this illusion provides an admirable excuse for all their crimes.

But to pass over this incongruity, let us emphasize the fact that among the "progressive" intellectuals, the cult of the Historical Process springs from the same motives as their infatuation for backward countries: the social eminence which they have failed to attain in their own countries and in the present is projected upon distant countries of the future.

But one must not believe that their means and goals are fragile because they are merely polemical. All theocracies—and Communism is one—thrive on words. Communism is a verbal edifice supported by police terror. And this powerful support permits Communism to invent, adjust, and exploit ideologies as no other theocracy has ever done before. To seduce with intoxicating rhetoric and maintain through physical terror—these are the means to its end.

It is a classic twist in the manufacture of Communist ideologies to elevate to the sublime those who are most unfortunate. They begin by asserting that the condition of the proletariat must be improved, and this sets rational chords vibrating. Then, once in power, since it is no longer a question of the emancipation of the proletariat, they extol their condition, such as it is, and romantic chords begin to vibrate. And so on, alternately, they pluck the chords of the most contradictory sentiments, and people are duped.

It may be painful to us that the Communists succeed, but this should not tempt us to imitate them. For in the last analysis, their constructions, which with excessive kindness we have called ideologies, are built upon the ruins of truth. Brilliant ideas founded on lies are called illusions, and the cultivation of illusion is demagoguery, the world's oldest political evil. The Communists are original only in the enormity with which they endow this evil. In fact, only demagoguery gives historical dimension to Communism. Aside from the small list of current electoral promises devoted to taxes and tomorrows, the Communists place their illusions on the scale of centuries, and secure them there with the asserted necessities of history. Classical demagogues merely had the audacity to work upon ignorance and the reality of the present. Communist demagogues have conscripted science and teleology.

This type of demagoguery, although far more impudent than others, recruits into its service philosophical terminology—a recipe for dazzling and enticing youth. The only drawback is that the "progressive" intellectual cooks run the risk of falling into their own pot.

[TRANSLATED FROM *La Revue Socialiste*]

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This article forms the final section of a lengthy study, "Two Roads from Marx: The Themes of Alienation and Exploitation, and Workers' Control in Socialist Thought," which was given as a paper at the international seminar on Workers' Participation in Management, held in Vienna, Sept. 19–25, 1958, under the auspices of the Congress for Cultural Freedom.

MEANING IN WORK—A NEW DIRECTION

Daniel Bell

In recent years there has arisen a sophistication which understands that the abolition of private property alone will not guarantee the end of exploitation. The problem has been posed as: how does one check bureaucracy. The problem is a real one. In socialist thought the "new" answer is to raise again the theme of "workers' control." This has shaped the demand for *comités d'enterprise* in France, for *mitsbestimmungsrecht* in Germany, and is emerging in Britain as the left-wing answer to the British Labor Party's plan, "Industry and Society." It underlay, of course, the demand for workers' councils in Poland and Yugoslavia. I have no quarrel with the demand *per se*. But often it is difficult to know what the concept means.

In Communist theory (to the extent there has been one apart from the opportunistic absorption of syndicalist ideas), the slogan of "workers' control" was conceived of almost entirely in *political* terms, as one of the means of undercutting the economic power of the employer class under capitalism, as a means *to* power, but not as a technique of democratization or the administration of industry *in* a socialist society.*

At the other extreme there were the detailed, imaginative, but unworkable blueprints pieced together by the medievalists, distributivists and syndicalists who formed the Guild Socialist movement in Britain before and after World War I. The movement has been insufficiently appreciated for the Guild Socialists wrestled, as did the earlier Fabians, with concrete problems of administration. Most of the questions which

* See, for example, the explicit statement by Trotsky, the 1931 letter entitled *Ueber Arbeiterkontrolle der Produktion,* reprinted in *The New International,* May–June 1951, pp. 175–178. "For us," said Trotsky, "the concept of workers' control exists within the scope of a capitalist regime, under bourgeois domination ... [it] means a kind of economic dual power in the factory, banks, business enterprises, etc.... Thus a workers' control regime, by its very nature, can only be thought of as a provisional, transitional regime during the period of the shattering of the bourgeois state..."

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beset socialist and managerial societies today were anticipated and thrashed out in Guild Socialist debates. They were aware that nationalization of the means of production might result in the exploitation of the individual Guilds by the State (e.g., the building of unwanted new investment at the expense of consumption or leisure, the setting of high work norms, etc.). On the other hand, syndicalism, or the ownership of production by the individual Guilds, might lead to a separatism or "parochial imperialism" whereby a single Guild might seek to benefit at the expense of others. The Guildsmen "solved" the problem by vesting title to capital and land in the State, but leasing the property to the Guilds at a rent (or interest) large enough to cover Government expenses. Politically, the Guild State was to be composed of a bicameral body, the one a geographical Parliament, the other made up of functional (i.e., vocational) representatives. The consumer, through Parliament, was to set the goals of production; the Council of Guild Representatives was responsible for the efficient conduct of industry. Each Guild was to be a self-governing body, based on local councils; membership was to be open freely, but if jobs were unavailable, the State was to support the waiting applicant until he could work. Each Guild was set to its own condition of work—tempo, grievance procedures, etc. The Guild would receive money in proportion to its membership, but, could distribute the shares in accordance with the wishes of the membership, either in equal shares or in differentials according to skills. In contrast to production, distribution was to be under the control of the State, with Parliament determining wage and price levels, and the general level of new investment. Foreign trade, inevitably, would be a Government monopoly. But ordinary forms of personal property, homes, autos, etc., would be left to the individual.

As a compromise between statism and syndicalism, Guild Socialism has given us many useful guides. Its weakness is that it sought to grapple with too many problems and that it set forth too detailed a blueprint. It was, paradoxically, too rational. Human societies cannot be made over *de nuovo*. One has to begin, pragmatically, with existing structures and with the character, temperament, and traditions—and desires —of the people concerned.

IF THE SLOGAN of "workers' control" is raised, the simple starting point, perhaps, is to ask: workers' control over *what?* Control over the entire economy? This is unfeasible. A syndicalist society is too much a single-interest affair, which, if extended with its own bureaucracy, would simply substitute one form of interest domination for another. In a single industry, or enterprise? One can question, further, whether this, too, is a meaningful—realistic—concept.* The British

* Hannah Arendt, the keenest student of totalitarianism, and a sympathetic critic of the idea of workers' councils, writes apropos of the Hungarian and Polish experiences of 1957: "... it is quite doubtful whether the political principle of equality and self-rule can be applied to the economic sphere of life as well. It may be that ancient political theory, which held that economics, since it was bound up with the necessities of life, needed the rule of masters to function well, was not so

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T.U.C. report, in 1932, on *The Control of Industry*—which accepted the public corporation rather than Guild structure as the form of nationalized property, and joint consultation rather than syndicalist organization as the form of social control—was a hard-headed recognition of the limits of workers' control. And the new British Labor Party program on "Industry and Society," which extends the idea of social control, through State ownership of shares in enterprises, although increasing the risk of a new "managerial" class society, is, in principle, a large step forward in creating "social accountability" of corporations to society,* which is the aim, too, of workers' control.

The major confusion in the idea of workers' control, as it has been put forward by socialists and syndicalists, is that the word *control* has always had a double meaning: as direction (e.g., to control the course of an automobile) and as a check (e.g., to control someone's rage). Usually, in the debates on workers' control, the proponents have rarely singled out the different meanings. Roughly speaking, socialists have talked of workers' control to mean direction, management of an enterprise by the workers themselves, or the participation in management. This latter sense is the meaning of workers' control as it is being tried in Yugoslavia. The difficulty inherent in worker participation in management is that it tends to minimize the separate interest of workers from management, and to rob the workers of an independent status in the plant. Historically, the trade union has been a restrictive and protective organization, acting to defend workers' interests. Where the union has become an instrument to "control" the workers, in the interests of national unity or for the state, workers have formed substitute bodies. This was the history of the shop stewards movement in Britain during World War I, of the workers' councils in Poland in October 1956. In Yugoslavia today, the Communist Party is in a dilemma. Because the workers have been brought into participation in management, there seems to be no functional role for the union; and some theorists have gone so far as to say that the trade unions ought to be eliminated. In Britain, on the other hand, the unions in nationalized industries have consistently refused to participate on the Boards of Management, or to take responsibility for production. The union continues to act as an independent, defensive institution vis-a-vis management.

Is there, then, no role at all for workers' control? If there is any meaning to the idea of workers' control, it is control—*in the shop*—

* Even joint consultation, it should be pointed out, runs the risk of being a catchword. One can point out, wryly, that in practice joint consultation, may simply become a "buck-passing" mechanism whereby each of the parties, managers as well as works' council representatives, evades its own responsibilities. For a revealing picture of this, particularly for those who fear the spectre of "manageralism," see the study by Elliot Jaques, *The Changing Culture of a Factory*, Tavistock Publications, London 1951.

wrong after all." For her extraordinary discussion of the meaning of the spontaneous emergence of workers' councils during the 1957 events, see her article "Totalitarian Imperialism," *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 20, 1958, pp. 5–43.

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over the things which directly affect his work-a-day life: the rhythms, pace, and demands of work; a voice in the setting of equitable standards of pay; a check on the demands of the hierarchy over him. These are perhaps "small" solutions to large problems, what Karl Popper has called "piecemeal technology," but look where the eschatological visions have led!

LET US SEPARATE out two things which are crucial, I believe, in affecting the worker in the plant: one is the question of equity in treatment; the other is the impact of technology and an engineering culture on the work process itself.

By *equity,* a worker wants a situation where no supervisor should have arbitrary or capricious power over him, and where some channel exists whereby his own grievances find an impartial adjudication. And secondly, by equity, a worker wants to be assured that his wage, *relative to others in the plant or area,* is fair. The question of differentials in wages is a difficult one. In the past these differentials have been set by custom, or by the supply-and-demand balances in the market. In recent years, engineers have sought, through job evaluation schemes, to set up "impartial" intervals between classes of jobs. Often these have failed because the "ornery" workers refuse to believe that mechanical criteria, mechanically applied, constitute equity; and sometimes because "power" groups in a plant refuse to recognize a scheme which disadvantages them.* In the West, by and large, the functions of the unions (or of shop committees, since in Germany, for example, the unions deal with regional wage policies and have no roots in the shops) have been directed, with a large measure of success, to securing recognized standards of equity written into collective-bargaining contracts. The principles of seniority, of arbitration and umpire procedures, of union determination of methods of sharing wage increases (e.g., through equal or across-the-board allocations, or through percentage increases), all attest to the victory of the workers' conception of equity, rather than the employers', in the matter of fair treatment in the plant.

But in the second aspect of control, in the challenge to the work process itself, the unions have failed. The most characteristic fact about the American factory worker today—and probably the worker in factories in other countries as well—is his lack of interest in work. Few individuals think of "the job" as a place to seek any fulfillment. There is quite often the camaraderie of the shop, the joking, gossip, and politicking of group life. But *work* itself, the daily tasks which the individual is called upon to perform, lacks any real challenge, and is

* For an interesting attempt to set an "objective" standard of pay differentials, see the article by Elliot Jaques in *The New Scientist,* July 3, 1958 (London), p. 313. Jaques believes that by measuring the "time-span" which an individual has to perform jobs on his own initiative, without review, he is able to elicit "an unrecognized system of norms of what constitutes fair payment for any given level of work," and that these norms are "intuitively recognized by the people at work themselves." This would lead, says Jaques, to "an empirical basis for a national wages and salary policy."

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seen only as an irksome chore to be shirked, or to be finished as best as possible. Most workers, by and large, are not articulate about work. Questionnaires and surveys provide merely the muttered semi-approvals or disapprovals, the grudging assents, or the grunted displeasures which mask the "to-hell-with-it-all" attitude of the individual who feels his life-space constricted.* But the behavior itself becomes a judgment. First and foremost, it appears in the constant evasion of thought about work, the obsessive reveries (often sexual) while on the job, the substitution of the glamour of leisure for the drudgeries of work. Yet the harsher aspects are present as well. It takes the form of crazy racings on the job or what the workers call the "make-out" game, i.e., the break-neck effort to fulfill one's quotas early in order to lounge for the rest of the hour or day (and it is striking to see how this pattern is recapitulated identically by the Soviet worker in his habit of "storming"), by the sullen war against production standards, and, most spectacularly, even if infrequently, by the eruption of "wildcat strikes."**

Contemporary sociology has come to the melancholy, and defeatist conclusion, that technology as "progress" cannot be reversed.† In a rational order one would *reduce* to as little time as possible the number of hours spent in irksome work, and then find respite in leisure. But is this the case? Can we not do something about the nature of the work process itself?

ACTUALLY, THE ROOT of alienation lies *not* in the *machine*—as romantics like William Morris or Friedrich Junger were prone to say—but in the concept of *efficiency* which underlies the organization of the work process. The idea of efficiency dictates a breakdown of work and a flow of work in accordance with engineering rationality. It seeks to increase output by erasing any "waste"; and waste is defined as those moments of time which are not subject to the impersonal control of the work process itself. Central to the idea of efficiency is a notion of measurement. Modern industry in fact, began not with the

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* Some sociologists deny that workers in a plant tend to be unhappy, and point to survey data—much of it collected by management—to show that the workers are fairly well satisfied with the job. The argument misses two essential points: One, there may be other aspects than work itself which provide some satisfaction, e.g., the clique or the group, and, second, no questionnaire on satisfaction is meaningful unless the worker is aware of alternative possibilities of work. (This, I suppose is the meaning of the old saw: how can you keep them down on the farm once they've seen Paree? A farmer never having seen or known Paree may be satisfied with his lot; but is he, once he knowns wider horizons? My quarrel with industrial sociology—see my article "Adjusting Men to Machines," *Commentary*, July 1947, and my essay on *Work and Its Discontents*—is that not only has industrial sociology accepted managerial biases in conceptualizing what is a problem (e.g., the idea of "restriction of output") but that it has failed to conceive of alternative methods of organization of work so as to provide real choices for a worker.

** The most comprehensive account of the effect of machine labor on human personality can be found in George Friedmann's *Ou va le Travail Humaine?*, Paris, 1951. Most of this is included in the translation by Harold Sheppard published in *Industrial Society*, Free Press, 1958. See, too, Alvin Gouldner, *Wildcat Strike*, Antioch Press, 1953.

† See David Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd*, as a prime example.

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factory—the factory has been known in ancient times—but with measurement. Through measurement we passed from the division of labor into the division of time. Through measurement, industry was able to establish a calculus of time and pay a worker on the basis of units of work performed. But the value of work itself could only be defined in terms of its cost to the user; and cost was—and is—conceived primarily in narrow market terms. Thus the psychological costs of indifference or neuroses, the social costs of road and transport, are charges all outside the interest and control of the enterprise. Thus such a consideration, for example, as the size of a factory is determined largely by the possibility of increasing output rather than by the costs involved in travel time for the worker, community crowding, etc. In these situations the human being is taken as one more variable in the process, and quite often a very subordinate one. Our emphasis has been on economic growth, increased output, but not on what kind of men are being molded by the work process. Even the recent vogue of "human relations" has been considered a justified cost to management not in terms of increasing satisfaction in work but of increasing output. The assumption has been made, of course, that if a worker is more satisfied he will increase his output. But what if the costs of satisfaction, involved in reorganizing the work process, mean a *decreased* output? What then? Which "variable" does one seek to maximize: the satisfaction of the work group, or the productivity of the enterprise?

I have tried to spell out in some detail elsewhere* the reasons why the cult of efficiency has been an unanalyzed assumption in the "logics" of modern industry. Some of it is due to a utilitarian rationality (one of the sources, too, for the practical British bent for seeing problems in "administrative" rather than ideological terms); much to early technological necessity since the nature of early steam power required the bunching of work. Once the goal of efficiency was established, however, the rationalization of work began; so, in Taylorism, we have the detailed breakdown of time, and with Gilbreth the economizing of motion.

In the United States apart from questions of production standards, the unions have failed to challenge the organization of work. To do so would require a radical challenge to society as a whole: to question the location of industry or size of plant is not only to challenge managerial prerogatives, it is to question the logic of a consumption economy whose prime consideration is lower costs and increasing output. Moreover, how could any single enterprise, in a competitive situation, increase its costs by reorganizing the flow of work, without falling behind its competitors?

But this is not only a failing of "capitalist" society. In the socialist

* See my book *Work and Its Discontents,* Beacon Press, Boston, 1956, for a discussion of the relation of efficiency to the concepts of rationality, and the necessary relationship of meaningful work to meaningful play and leisure. Shorter and variant versions have been published in *L.P.E. Papers,* Number 4, "Work in the Welfare Age," London, July 1956, and "Notes on Work," *Encounter,* July 1954.

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societies, sadly, there has been almost no imaginative attempt to think through the meaning of the work process. In Britain, this has been, in part, the heritage of the Webbs, and their own concept of efficiency (capitalism for them was waste and anarchic; socialism would be a "tidy" society). But of equal weight is the fact that with outmoded machinery and in a falling world market, British society has been forced to think primarily of productivity in order to compete in the world markets. And who, today, would challenge the God of Productivity, if it might mean a lowered standard of living?

In Communist countries, where minority dictatorship has sought to speed rapid industrialization, the effects on the workers have been even harsher. Lenin's solution for the disorganization of production, for example, in a famous speech in June 1919, was to introduce piecework and Taylorism, in order to discipline the workers!* In the West, at least, where dehumanized work results in increasing productivity, the fruits of that productivity are shared with the workers. In the Communist countries, not only is work dehumanized but the social surplus through "primitive accumulation" goes to enhance the power of the State.

For under-developed countries, where living standards are pitifully low, it is difficult to talk of sacrificing production in order to make work more meaningful to the worker. Yet these are not, nor should they be put in either/or terms. Engineers have learned that if efficiency considerations are pushed too far—if work is broken down into the most minute parts and made completely monotonous—it becomes self-defeating. The question is always one of "how much." But the question must be stated and placed in the forefront of considerations.

One need not accept the fatalism of the machine process—or create new utopias in automation—to see that changes are possible. These range from such large-scale changes as genuine decentralization, which brings work to the workers rather than transporting large masses of workers to the work place, to the relatively minute but important changes in the pace of work, such as extending job cycles, job enlargement, allowing natural rhythms of work.**

The specifics are there: what is needed is a change of fundamental attitude. If one is to say, for example, that the worker is not a commodity, then one should take the step of abolishing piecework and eliminating the distinction whereby one man gets paid on a weekly or annual salary, and another man is paid by the piece or the hour. If one accepts again the heritage of the old socialist and humanist tradition of worker protest, then the work place itself and not the market should be the center of determination of pace and tempo of work. The "flow of demand," to employ the sociological jargon, must come from the worker himself rather than from the constraints imposed from above.

* "Scientific Management and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat," *Collected Works*, Vol. 7.

** See, for example, Charles A. Walker's *The Man on the Assembly Line*, for a fascinating discussion of changes in time cycles and the effect on work.

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Even if costs were to rise, surely there is an important social gain in that the place where a man spends such a large part of his day becomes a place of meaning and satisfaction rather than of drudgery. Fifty years ago, few enterprises carried safety devices to protect workers' limbs and lives. Some protested that adoption of such devices would increase costs. Yet few firms today plead that they cannot "afford" to introduce safety devices. Is meaningfulness in work any less important?

Among Our Contributors . . . David Bazelon is a writer on literary and political subjects whose articles have appeared in many magazines. . . . Daniel Bell is the well-known writer on labor and political subjects; he is the author of a book on problems of work, as well as of a narrative history of American radicalism, which appeared in the Princeton University studies on American socialism. He is at present working on a study of Communism and the American labor movement. . . . David Spitz, who made his first DISSENT appearance during the discussion of Hannah Arendt's article on the South, is a teacher of political science; his most recent book, "Democracy and the Challenge of Power," will be reviewed in the next issue by Mulford Sibley. . . . Suzanne Labin is a French journalist and historian, currently winner of the Prix de la Liberte; her article has been adapted from the French journal, **Revue Socialiste.** . . . Seymour Melman is a teacher of economics who has recently published a much-discussed book on disarmament and a study of factory life called "Decision Making and Productivity." . . . Norman T. DiGiovanni is a young writer who has published reviews in **The Nation** and is currently working on a book about the Italian neighborhood of Boston.

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AMERICAN NOTEBOOK Some Brief Comments On the Domestic Scene

When the Recession Came to Michigan

Seymour Faber

When the recession came to Michigan, it did not create a sudden crisis as much as bring to a climax socio-economic trends that had been gathering for some years. In 1958 unemployment in Michigan reached a peak of 460,000 or 15.7 per cent of the labor force. There has since been some improvement, the latest figure, as of April 15th, being 300,000; but it is both significant and troublesome that, while so substantial a number of workers remain without jobs, the auto industry has meanwhile reached a point where it is producing the same number of cars per month as in 1957.

In human terms, what we have in major areas of Detroit begins to resemble an old-style depression. No one seriously expects the auto industry to rehire the thousands of laid-off men; nor does anyone propose any significant measure for creating jobs. On the surface things may be quiet and the casual stroller through the city might be struck by nothing more ominous than an unusual number of closed-up stores; but anyone who cares to probe beneath this surface can find plenty of human misery, plenty of bewilderment and desperation. Consider this one fact: between Dec. 1957 and Dec. 1958 the number receiving relief almost doubled in Michigan and more than doubled in the city of Detroit.

Professor William Haber, an expert student of the Michigan economy, has suggested four reasons for the continued economic crisis:

- Shifts in defense spending from conventional weapons to missiles.
- Decentralization of the auto industry.
- Automation.
- Plant shutdowns.

The weapons revolution has, of course, struck a heavy blow at the Michigan economy, but this is a problem that does not arise from within the auto industry itself. So let me confine myself to the three that do.

Decentralization

During its year of early growth, the auto industry bunched most of its plants in Michigan for a number of reasons: closeness to raw materials, a large supply of skilled labor cheaply available, the fact that technological pioneers like Ford and Olds came from and worked here. This concentration, as it happened, proved advantageous for another reason: the major population center of the country, and

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thereby the biggest market, was in the nearby Northeast and Midwest.

Since then there have been large-scale shifts in American population, particularly toward the West coast. Transporting thousands of cars each year from Detroit to California came to be too costly, and the companies found it more economical to make parts in Michigan and then ship them to distant assembly plants. Inevitably, this was followed by setting up throughout the country new parts plants that were more modern than the pioneer ones in Michigan. Soon whole cars were being produced far away from what had once been the exclusive center of the industry.

There was another reason for decentralization. No matter what appearances may suggest, the auto industry remains far from reconciled to the power of trade unionism. For the present, it has no expectation and, perhaps, no desire to crush the UAW; but it hopes, for the first time in twenty-five years, to weaken the union's bargaining power considerably.

Over the past decade decentralization has been used as a way of escaping from the more experienced and militant unionists who had gone through the Michigan sit-down strikes and formed the backbone of the UAW. It has also been a way of finding a new work force which, even if formally organized, is still likely to be more pliable than that in the Michigan plants. And decentralization has followed from the discovery of the giant corporations that they had previously been extremely vulnerable to a concerted union campaign—as during the sitdowns, when it became clear that production of the Chevrolet, the GM bread-and-butter car, could be halted if the union closed down Plant No. 4 in Flint, where all Chevrolet motors where then produced.

Still another factor prompting decentralization has been the obsolescence of the old-style multi-storied plants. New production methods associated with automation require single-level expanses where there can be a free flow of parts; and often the companies found it cheaper to build these new plants in distant states than to rebuild the old ones in Michigan.

In General Motors decentralization has been a studied policy since at least the late thirties, and with the exception of Cadillac, GM no longer has any major concentration in Detroit. Ford began decentralizing in the late forties, when Henry II replaced Old Henry. Chrysler, lagging as usual, has begun to decentralize recently.

How far this process has gone even in the Ford empire is suggested by the fact that between January 1953 and January 1957 (I use this latter date as a cut-off to avoid complicating recession effects), Ford increased its total work force by some 26,000 men, while at the same time there was a ten per cent drop in the number of its Michigan employees. For the first time in its history, almost half of the 150,000 people working for Ford now live outside of Michigan.

Automation

According to statistics of both the UAW and the Michigan Employment Security Commission, car production in the decade between 1948 and 1958 increased by 50.5 per cent, going from about 4 million to over 7 million per year—while the number of men employed in the industry increased by only .5 per cent. In 1953 and 1957 approximately the same number of cars were produced—6.1 million—but

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the number of workers employed in Michigan auto plants dropped from 364,000 to 278,000. The results are even more striking if a similar comparison is made between 1952 and 1958: about 117,000 fewer workers were required to produce approximately the same number of cars.

We have reached a crucial turning point in the economy of the mass production industries: *employment no longer follows production.*

Now there are certain local reasons for this dramatic shrinkage in the number of workers needed to maintain previous levels of production. Major reasons include overtime and speedup —each of them bitterly-disputed issues in the shops, though word of this seldom reaches people outside of Detroit. Until the last few years, when the companies needed more production they hired more men. But now, with the increase of "fringe benefits," the cost of training new workers, and the need to pay unemployment insurance, the companies find it cheaper to give the employees more work, even at overtime rates, than to add new workers or reemploy men who have been laid-off. No issue has created stronger feelings among the UAW ranks: a division of sentiment between employed and unemployed that hardly distresses the companies.

But such immediate developments apart, everyone in Michigan who is concerned with the problem agrees that the most significant long-range factor in reducing employment is automation. There are no reliable figures on the proportion of unemployment that can be directly attributed to automation, but it is surely the one factor that is certain to increase in importance—and the one that will be most difficult to cope with through traditional union methods.

Plant Shutdowns

Decentralization and automation, though not these alone, magnified the difficulties faced by the smaller auto companies during the past several years. In response to Big Three pressures, the independents began a gradual process of pooling resources, mergers and liquidations—a process that seems not yet at an end. The Kaiser company moved from Willow Run to Toledo and then stopped producing cars entirely. Hudson moved to Racine, and stopped producing cars. Packard moved to South Bend and ceased independent production.

Within the Big Three there were similar developments. When Ford built a new automated press steel plant in Buffalo, it cancelled a long-standing contract with the Murray Body Corporation—and the latter went out of business. Lincoln closed its Detroit plant and moved elsewhere. Chrysler, it is now rumored, plans to shut its plant in Hamtramck, the industrial suburb of Detroit.

There has, it is true, been a certain movement into the Detroit area, but for the most part it consists of minor companies which employ small numbers of workers. This may provide diversification of industry, but it has not yet made a serious dent in the problem of employment and there is no reason to expect that it will.

Unemployment, as it now exists in Michigan, is not merely or even primarily a recession phenomenon. It results from major changes in the structure of the dominant industry and in methods of production. The traditional socialist indictment of the anarchy of capitalist economy—an indictment that, for obvious reasons, has been

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somewhat muted in recent years—would seem suddenly to hold with new force.

Lots of people are suffering—physically, morally, psychically. On a recent TV program sponsored by the UAW, an unemployed worker, when asked what he planned to do now that his compensation was ending and he had several children to feed, blurted out, "There's always the river." This kind of talk has not often been heard in America during the last two decades, but no one listening to this man could suppose it was anything but an utterly authentic statement.

Other responses have also indicated desperation. Some unemployed union members, resentful of the fact that in certain plants the employed workers had overtime while they remained out on the streets, picketed both the Chrysler plants and the UAW headquarters, Solidarity House. The idea of jobless workers picketing the office of the most progressive union in the country, is not a pretty one; and many UAW officials, who had been lulling themselves into deep sleep with dreams of certified prosperity, are beginning to show signs of disturbance.

The union's response to unemployment is too complex a matter to be discussed in a brief report of this kind; I hope DISSENT turns to it in a future issue. But let me indicate my opinion.

Because the UAW has concentrated in recent years almost entirely on wages and fringe benefits, it has allowed the bitch goddess of progress—and in the Michigan jungle that dusty old phrase takes on a new vividness—to become the rationale by means of which the companies have determined the kinds and amounts of automation, decentralization and overtime without considering the human consequences. For some years now, in order to better its competitive position, Chrysler has been conducting a ruthless campaign to increase job standards and to speed up production on the lines without adding or even while decreasing, manpower. The union leadership's role in this case has been to offer no real resistance and at times, even aid management in getting workers to accept these higher job standards. Only during the last contract negotiations did the UAW press for and win certain rights for workers affected by plant shutdowns. Now, apparently in response to the rumblings of unemployed UAW members, Walter Reuther has begun to talk about the moral indefensibility of overtime when there is so much unemployment. But it surely isn't mere "radical carping" to suggest that problems of this kind might have been put on the bargaining table some years ago, so that the men now suffering the consequences of economic "progress" could have gained some voice in controlling it, and some protection from it.

There are various proposals being discussed in labor circles on how to meet the crisis. Most important among these is the idea of fighting for a shorter work week—since by any rational or humane standards, that is the proper result of technological improvements. Overtime and the speedup are major targets for union action, and in general, there is a need for the UAW to press for the right of the workers to share in the determination of future changes in the industry.

Meanwhile, despite the various "cushions" provided by social legislation, the consequences of major economic and technological changes can still be traumatic for large numbers of workers. When one looks at the

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automobile industry, with its ethical barbarism, its maniacal wastefulness and its human indifference, one rediscovers the meaning of the idea of democratic and socialist planning—rediscovers it by measuring the distance between what could be done through the use of humane intelligence and what is actually happening. And one rediscovers, too, the truth that Nathaniel Hawthorne, very far from being a radical, noticed a century ago: "In this republican country, amid the fluctuating waves of our social life, somebody is always at the drowning point."

From Surplus Value to the Mass-Media

Norman Mailer

No one can work his way through *Das Kapital* without etching on his mind forever the knowledge that profit must come from loss —the lost energy of one human being paying for the comfort of another; if the process has become ten times more subtle, complex, and untraceable in the modern economy, and conceivably a hundred times more resistant to the careful analysis of the isolated radical, it is perhaps now necessary that some of us be so brash as to cut a trail of speculation across subjects as vast as the title of this piece.

Let me start with a trivial discrepancy. Today one can buy a can of frozen orange juice sufficient to make a quart for 30 cents. A carton of prepared orange juice, equal in quality, costs 45 cents. The difference in price is certainly not to be found by the value of the container, nor in the additional cost of labor and machinery which is required to squeeze the oranges, since the process which produces frozen orange juice is if anything more complex—the oranges must first be squeezed and then frozen. Of course orange juice which comes in quart cartons is more expensive to ship, but it is doubtful if this added cost could account for more than 2 or 3 cents in the price. (The factors are complex, but may reduce themselves as follows: The distributors for cartons of prepared orange juice are generally the milk companies who are saved most of the costs of local distribution by delivering the orange juice on their milk routes. While the cost of shipping whole oranges is greater, because of their bulk, than cans of frozen juice, it must be remembered that the largest expense in freight charges are loading and unloading, and the majority of freshly picked oranges have in any case to be shipped by freight to a freezer plant, converted, and shipped again.)

What is most likely is that the price is arrived at by some kind of developed if more or less unconscious estimation by the entrepreneur of what it is worth to the consumer not to be bothered with opening a can,

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mixing the frozen muddle with three cans of water, and shaking. It is probable that the additional 12 or 13 cents of unnecessary price rise has been calculated in some such ratio as this: the consumer's private productive time is worth much more to him than his social working time, because his private productive time, that is the time necessary to perform his household functions, is time taken away from his leisure. If he earns $3.00 an hour by his labor, it is probable that he values his leisure time as worth ideally two or three times as much, let us say arbitrarily $6.00 an hour, or 10 cents a minute. Since it would take three or four minutes to turn frozen orange juice into drinkable orange juice, it may well be that a covert set of values in the consumer equates the saving of 3 or 4 minutes to a saving of thirty or forty *ideal* cents of his pleasure-time. To pay an extra 12 actual cents in order to save this forty ideal cents seems fitting to his concept of value. Of course, he has been deprived of 10 actual cents—the extra comfort should have deprived him of no more than two of his actual cents. So the profit was extracted here from a disproportionate exploitation of the consumer's need to protect his pleasure-time rather than from an inadequate repayment to the worker for his labor. (Such contradictions to this thesis as the spate of Do-It-Yourself hobbies, or magazine articles about the problem of what to do with leisure are of too serious a nature to dismiss with a remark—it can however be suggested that the general hypothesis may not be contradicted: the man who is bored with his leisure time, or so industrious as to work at handicrafts, can still resent those inroads upon his leisure which he has not chosen. Indeed it might be argued that the tendency to be attracted to private labor-saving devices is greatest in the man who doesn't know what to do with himself when he is at home.)

AT ANY RATE, if the hypothesis sketched here should prove to have any economic validity, the consequences are worth remarking. When the source of profit is extracted more and more (at one remove or another) from the consumer's at-home working-time, the consumer is paying a disproportionate amount for the desire to work a little less in his leisure-time. Over the economy as a whole, this particular germ of profit may still be miniscule, but it is not at all trivial once one includes the expenses of the war economy whose costs are paid by taxation, an indirect extraction of leisure-time from the general consumer, who then has noticeably less money in his leisure to pursue the sports, occupations, and amusements which will restore to his body the energy he has spent in labor. (To take the matter into its real complexity, the conflicting anxieties of living in a war-and-pleasure-oriented environment opens most men and women to a daily spate of psychic havoc whose damages can be repaired only by the adequate exercise of a *personal* leisure appropriate to each, exactly that leisure which the war economy must impoverish.)

By this logic, the root of capitalist exploitation has shifted from the proletariat-at-work to the mass-at-leisure who now may lose so much as four or five *ideal* hours of extra leisure a day. The old exploitation was vertical—the poor supported the rich. To this vertical exploitation must now

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be added the horizontal exploitation of the mass by the State and by Monopoly, a secondary exploitation which is becoming more essential to a modern capitalist economy than the direct exploitation of the proletariat. If the origin of this secondary exploitation has come out of the proliferation of the machine with its consequent and relative reduction of the size of the proletariat and the amount of surplus value to be accumulated, the exploitation of mass-leisure has been accelerated by the relative contraction of the world market. Through the post-war years, prosperity has been maintained in America by invading the wage-earner in his home. Nineteenth century capitalism could still find its profit in the factory; when the worker was done, his body might be fatigued but his mind could look for a diversion which was relatively free of the industry for which he worked. So soon, however, as the surplus labor of the proletariat comes to be replaced by the leisure-value given up by the consumer, the real expropriator of the wage-earner has to become the mass-media; for if the domination of leisure-time is more significant to the health of the economy than the exploitation of the working-time, the stability of the economy derives more from manipulating the psychic character of leisure than forcibly subjecting the working class to its productive role. It is likely that the survival of capitalism is no longer possible without the creation in the consumer of a series of psychically disruptive needs which circle about such wants and emotions as the desire for excessive security, the alleviation of guilt, the lust for comfort and new commodity, and a consequent allegiance to the vast lie about the essential health of the State and the economy, an elaborated fiction whose bewildering interplay of real and false detail must devil the mass into a progressively more imperfect apperception of reality and thus drive them closer to apathy, violence, and psychosis. Nineteenth century capitalism exhausted the life of millions of workers; twentieth century capitalism can well end by destroying the mind of civilized man.

IF THERE IS A FUTURE for the radical spirit, which often enough one can doubt, it can come only from a *new* revolutionary vision of society and its sicknesses, its strengths, its conflicts, contradictions and radiations, its self-created incapacity to solve its evasions of human justice. There is the root of the social problem. An injustice half-corrected results in no more than a new sense of injustice and suppressed violence in both parties, which is why revolutionary situations are meaningful and liberal situations are not, for liberal solutions end by compromising a society in the nausea of its past and so bog the mass-mind further into the institutionalization of social habits and methods for which no one has faith, and from which one cannot extract the psychic marrow of culture upon which everyone in a civilization must depend. If this revolutionary vision is to be captured by any of us in a work of works, can one guess that this time it will explore not nearly so far into that jungle of political economy which Marx charted and so opened to rapid development, but rather will engage the empty skies, dead spaces, and sentimental cancers of that mass-media whose internal contradictions twist and quarter us

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between the lust of the economy (which radiates a greed-to-consume into us, with sex as the invisible salesman) and the guilt of the economy which must chill us with authority, charities for incurable disease, and all reminder that the mass consumer is only on drunken furlough from the ordering disciplines of church, F.B.I., and War.

The Triumph of American Capitalism

The methods by which giant corporations administer prices and destroy competition, have seldom been more vividly described than in *Administered Prices—Automobiles* (Govt. Printing Office, $1), a report of the Senate Subcommittee on Anti-Trust and Monopoly. Here are a few of the facts it presents on General Motors, which controls 50 per cent of the American auto market:

Average GM profits during the past ten years after taxes have come to a remarkable 25 per cent of net worth, almost 2½ times the average for manufacturing corporations in the United States. In 1957 GM's profit came to "only" 17 per cent, while in 1950 its profits reached 37.5 per cent. The 1950 figure is a trifle better than that for 1929—but the true magnitude of the comparison is realized only when one recalls that tax rates have gone up sharply since 1929. In 1929 GM profits *before* taxes came to 38.5 per cent; in 1950, to 77.4 per cent!

The pricing policy of this corporate giant, as described in the Subcommittee report, comes to the following: The first element in determining prices is an estimate for a 20 per cent profit *after* taxes, to which is added the cost of materials, labor, overhead, taxes and fixed costs, based on a "standard volume" of 80 per cent of production capacity. If volume goes above that, profits go up.

The report further shows that the cost of labor is not the primary factor in determining the cost of automobiles—despite current propaganda which would make every rise in wages an inevitable step toward a rise in prices. It is estimated that the average wholesale factory sales prices of all GM automobile units in 1957 came to $2,213. Of this, it is further estimated, between $300 and $400 went for labor, including the labor costs in purchased materials; $1,000 for materials; $550 for overhead; $312 for profit. But this is a figure for a relatively low production year. In 1955 the profit per unit came to $435 and the cost of labor about 30 per cent *less* than the profit.

But more. General Motors Acceptance Corporation, the largest auto finance company in America, returned a net profit of 17.6 per cent in 1957, which was had by charging automobile purchasers 11.2 per cent interest (though GMAC says its rates come to only six per cent.) GMAC is owned entirely by GM; in 1957 GMAC brought in $47 millions profit. Thus:

> General Motors, with its captive finance company, has a double incentive to maintain high automobile prices. As long as new cars are selling in volume, the higher the price, the greater the finance charge, and hence the greater the profitability of GMAC.

Finally: the absence of price competition among the Big Three of auto. In 1957 Ford announced its prices first, a 2.9 per cent increase over the previous year. Two weeks later GM announced an increase of 6.1 per cent. A week later Ford revised its prices upward, to match GM's prices. Then came Chrysler, averaging its prices about $20 higher per equivalent model. The Ford spokesman said that his company, in order to meet competition, had revised prices upward.

This kind of system is known in the United States as free enterprise.

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SOCIALISM WITHOUT MARX

Ben B. Seligman

I

One of the more ironic incidents in the history of economic thought was the development of a theory of socialism utilizing the very ideas employed to attack Marx. Dismayed by the sharply critical turn he had given to classicism, economists in the late 19th century resorted to the psychological notions of utility as an escape from the radical implications he had underscored. Beginning with W. Stanley Jevons (an interesting theoretician in spite of his silly sunspot business cycles notions) and the Austrian economists, Carl Menger, Friedrich von Wieser and Eugen von Bőhm-Bawerk, a new approach to economics was worked out. This was known as marginalism, and it is one of the dominant themes in economics today. Seeking to create a sound psychological basis for economic science, the marginalists concentrated on the behavior of individual firms rather than the totality of economic action. As suggested, one of their many noteworthy ventures was a broadside attack on Marxism. The Austrians particularly were determined to root out this alien influence in Western economics and they chortled approvingly when Eugen von Böhm-Bawerk announced the complete and utter demise of the Marxian heresy and the end of socialist doctrine.[1] Yet, it was the very marginalism that stemmed from Austrian theory which provided the building blocks with which a non-Marxian socialist theory could be constructed.

Marginalism sets up conduct models of the *firm*. In more modernistic terminology, it attempts to delineate a decision-making procedure. The behavior of firms is concerned fundamentally with purchases of labor and other resources, conversion of these into products, and the sale of what is put out. Since these can be expressed as "schedules of quantitative relationships" it becomes logically feasible to subject these patterns to a kind of mathematical treatment. Implicit in this is the assumption that the business man always wants to maximize his profit. Within this framework, marginalism becomes a rather powerful analytical tool. The process of finding a maximum is precisely what is involved in the concept of allocating scarce resources to alternative uses. What the theory says is that economic behavior has a large and significant rational component which, revolving as it does about measurable pecuniary quantities, is subject to analysis. Cost, revenue and productivity in their marginal form are said to simplify economic thinking.

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From the vantage point of marginalism, Bőhm-Bawerk could be extremely critical of Marxism. He derided it because the transformation of value into prices was a logical mish-mash. He argued that the theory of market exchange in Vol. III of *Das Kapital* contradicted the theory of Vol. I. He insisted that the subjectivist marginal approach was logically superior to cost of production notions such as the labor theory of value. Moreover, marginalist theory was capable of much greater theoretical generality and could be employed to evaluate extra-market phenomena. The Marxist response, however, was that Böhm-Bawerk was asking the wrong question: the basic economic problem was to analyze the social process of production. Marginalist theory merely substituted psychology for the facts of economic life.

YET THE SUBJECTIVISM of the Austrians provided a rational, logical set of ideas which could be used to describe the proper functioning of a socialist society. The Austrians began their theorizing with the case of Robinson Crusoe. They did this in order to facilitate outlining certain fundamental patterns of economic behavior which were supposedly universal. Questions of value, cost and returns were appropriate to any society, they said: in the long run, neither history nor sociology were really necessary for economic analysis. In fact, the more one could abstract from an historically determined system, be it capitalism or socialism, the purer the economics.

Friedrich von Wieser, a leader of the Austrian group, was one of the first to suggest that a general economic theory could be evolved to describe a socialist regime, for the problem of allocating scarce resources to alternative ends in order to maximize satisfactions was evident in any social order, whatever its political form.[2] Wieser had worked out the notion of opportunity cost, a concept which measured the *real* cost of a venture in terms of next best alternatives. This is, of course, an allocation problem and lends itself to analytic maximizing techniques. Incorporated into his treatment of economic calculation (the key question in a non-Marxian socialist theory) the basic ideas were couched in terms of comparing the economics of the household, business enterprise and government. From this it was easy to derive the notion that a capitalist and socialist economy were governed by the same basic "economic laws." The legal and political superstructures were put to one side, on the supposition that these reflected the "ends of existence," something supposedly irrelevant to pure economics.

The argument is basically simple: those who control the socialist economy have to account for used-up resources, assuming that the objective of rational behavior has meaning for such a society. The labor theory of value cannot be used for this allocation task. It is rather in the market that the required economic calculation is established. Surprisingly enough, Wieser has some doubts about the efficacy of capitalism's market. Competition, he thought, could be a risky affair,

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"where the stronger would too often find opportunities of mercilessly exploiting the weaker." His preference was for a mixed economy.[3]

II

The major attack on socialism as a practicable notion was leveled by Ludwig von Mises, a Viennese economics professor (now at NYU) for whom all the world's ills can be traced to a political disease called statism. A great adept at rather careless invective, Mises' opus *Socialism*[4] purports to be a massive sociological compendium on the subject. In it he speaks of chiliastic urges, collectivism, guild socialism, speculation, free love, the disutilities of labor as well as economic calculation. The latter point is, of course, central to Mises' position, and there is no doubt that he raised the question more sharply than anyone else. In fact, he's made a career of it.

Mises' main point is that markets in which prices are set for land, labor and capital, do not exist under socialism. But, economic calculation requires pricing. How, asks Mises, can it be carried on in the absence of markets? Economic activity would be absolutely chaotic, for without a pricing mechanism the central authority would have no data for allocating resources or determining consumer demand. Means of production would be applied to frivolous uses or entirely wasted.

This view was supported by Friedrich A. von Hayek, whose name is frequently associated ideologically with Mises.[5] Hayek interprets the problem a bit more subtly, however. He too sees the choice between socialism and capitalism revolving about the ability to distribute resources among alternative uses. Granting that a collective economy might approach a solution by ordering the community's needs in some pre-ordained way, he does not believe, however, that it could account for the costing problem. Costs are "advantages to be derived from the use of given resources in other directions." In capitalism, such a decision is brought to fruition in the market without any conscious action on the part of particular personalities. Decision making stems from the way in which prices are structured, and this in turn is rooted in the many acts of many people. At the same time, Hayek sought to reply to the welfare economists' approach, whose views we shall shortly examine. The latter implies a calculus of utility and it was the validity of this that he rejected. Individual utility scales could not be added to create a kind of social utility, for there is no way, said Hayek, in which inter-personal comparisons could be legitimately validated. Therefore, the only approach to a theory of resource allocation was through choice as reflected in the determination of market price under capitalism.

Hayek persisted in his view that a socialistic solution to the problem of resource allocation was impracticable simply because complete knowledge of all the relevant data would be unavailable to the authorities.[6] This must be so, since economic knowledge is of the bits and pieces variety, existing in but scattered parts, in a dispersed and

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incomplete form in the minds of many individuals. Such knowledge, he agrees, would have to be transferred to the central authorities under socialism. But it is not viable, communicable, scientific knowledge; it is rather, knowledge of time and place and is not the kind of information that can be subject to testing and measurement by a single agency. Such knowledge—of a particular skill, of the existence of some surplus stocks, of a sudden need for roofing—cannot enter into statistics and therefore cannot be conveyed to the planners.

Yet Hayek must admit that the capitalist market does transmit such information, since business men do react to bits and pieces knowledge in a way in which he would approve. But, he insists, central planning could employ only scientific or statistical data and such information is mainly technological in nature. The conclusion is obvious: only knowledge of time and place, mysteriously entering the price system, provides the basis for economic decisions, something that central planning cannot accomplish. Hayek's refusal to concede that planning might be an effective instrument for overcoming conditions of imperfect knowledge is odd, for business men more and more seek through such methods as market and motivation research to reduce bits and pieces information to measurable form. In actuality, efforts are always made to get behind forces that influence prices, for no businessman wishes to consign his future to the realm of total ignorance. There seems no logical reason why a central planning authority could not adopt similar devices.

HAYEK'S APPROACH is rooted in a concern with economic structure. For example, a central planning authority, he avers, would have to treat two similar machines located in different places as distinct means of production. Should the equipment have been installed during different time periods, there certainly would be no question as to the need to characterize these as dissimilar units, each of which must appear in the "equations" a central planning body must solve. This would make the problem of calculation insuperable. As Vilfredo Pareto once remarked, if with 100 people and 700 commodities there would be 70,699 equations, what happens when there are several million inhabitants and several thousand commodities? And when account is taken of goods in progress and those transported, it appears obvious that not all the relevant data can be made available to even formulate the necessary equations. Changes in climate, population, and the consumption package itself makes it dubious that "rational ideal" planning is a practicable proposition.

At the same time that Hayek was developing these seemingly devastating arguments against the collective society, Mises came up with the further notion that socialism, by sundering distribution from production, would compound its inner difficulties. Said he: "It is irreconcilable with the nature of the communal ownership of productive goods that [socialism] should rely even for a part of its distribution upon the

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economic imputation of the yield to the particular factors of production." That is to say, without a market, a socialist order would have no way of connecting the value of consumer goods with the process of production. Just why this should be so is not made clear although it is evident that to Mises the problem lies in the inability, in the absence of a market, to relate values of output to rewards of factors: in technical terms, so the argument runs, imputed values cannot be calculated without market prices. Mises, however, can only assert that "it is in the very nature" of socialist production that the shares of land, labor and capital are indeterminate. While there may be an exchange of consumer goods under socialism and it may be that money will be utilized as a kind of *numèraire,* his only important point is that production goods cannot be evaluated, making genuine economic calculation impossible. But when Mises admits in the same breath the possibility of socialist productive requirements being affected by demand, one begins to wonder whether his entire argument can really stand up! Clearly, if this is possible there must be a more intimate economic value relationship between the various sectors of the economy, even in a socialist system.

It should be obvious that the Mises-Hayek approach purports to make socialism a logical impossibility. When the Austrian utility analysis is adopted, valuation of consumer and producer goods take place through exchange value based on psychic entities. This must be so since it is the degree of participation and utilities that determines value. However, the transactions are entirely objective in themselves and they abstract from any utility comparisons. In fact, the latter is anathema to many economists. However, the economic calculations that come out of this process are short run ones, avoiding price variability over the long haul or factors outside the cash nexus of the exchange equation. All that Mises and Hayek are interested in is the market itself and the wonderful job it does, for no human mind can encompass the "bewildering mass of intermediate products and potentialities of production." Socialism can't work because under socialism there is no exchange of production goods. Therefore, socialism is not a real economic system, at least not in the Mises-Hayek meaning.

III

Curiously enough, the proper response to this seemingly devastating argument was available during the century's first decade in the writings of Vilfredo Pareto and some of his followers. Pareto had some rather sharp things to say about socialism in his *Les Systèmes Socialistes.*[7] Yet there stemmed from his ideas the notion that the general economic principles worked out for a capitalism could apply to socialism equally as well. Every society, whether it is Crusoe's, Jefferson's or Carnegie's, has but limited resources which must be distributed efficiently among competing needs. The economic problem is to do this in a way that will bring about maximum results in pro-

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ductivity, in profits, in taxes, in sales, in satisfaction. The economic theorist is unconcerned with ultimate social ends: he leaves that to the philosopher. His realm is that of resource decision-making, wherein the correct apportionment of limited resources is the major objective.

Pareto's hint was developed further in a genuinely remarkable way by an Italian economist, Enrico Barone. An army colonel and later professor of political economy who also wrote film scripts, Barone was "a prodigy of speed in assimilation and simplification." A superb mathematician, he developed in greater detail the Paretian optimum idea, especially as it might be applied to the planning of production in a collective society. His analysis, presented in an unfinished article, "The Ministry of Production in a Collective State," developed socialist equilibrium equations somewhat analogous to Léon Walras' general equilibrium system for a free enterprise economy.[8] While in the latter the simultaneous answer for all the variables yields a solution for both production and distribution, a socialist economy would have to decide on distribution in advance. Only then might the decisions regarding production be worked out. The purchasing power distributed by the Ministry would provide the basis for constructing the necessary supply and demand schedules leading to the allocation of labor and savings. Investment decisions would have to be decided upon by the central authority.

The basic data essential for establishing the equilibrium conditions of the socialist equations include information on available capital, productive capacity and coefficients of consumer tastes. The last merely implies that with a given set of prices, consumers distribute their income as between spending and saving in a certain way: it does not suggest an inquiry into utility or satisfaction. Four sets of equations are developed by Barone: the first relates to the physical basis of production; the others successively to new capital; the final cost of goods and services (which equals the prices of the factors of production); and the cost of production, which equals the prices of the final product plus the services of new capital. Given these equations as the basic economic model for production, there is no reason why a socialist Ministry cannot solve them as effectively as the free market. The basic precondition is simply that a pattern of income distribution be enforced which will maximize welfare in the Paretian sense. This suggests that in Barone's view production equilibrium in a socialist society depends on income distribution. Saving, interest and net investment will all have to be provided for. But to dictate what proportion of income should be saved might detract from "welfare," hence it may be preferable to employ a system of premiums in order to bring saving into balance with investment. By deducting a part of income, it would be possible for the authorities to produce new capital in excess of amortization, that is, to engage in economic expansion.

The significant point in Barone's model is that the individual is left free to make his own choices among consumption goods. The only

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guiding rule the Ministry should observe is to "maximize welfare." This can be done by so adjusting production as to reduce the need for individual movement; that is, to order the economy in a way that would make everyone satisfied with his current situation. When cost of production is minimized and the value of the output corresponds to such minimum cost, then equilibrium will have been achieved. Thus, quite subtly, Barone has brought us to a point where there is no distinction between the system of equations in a collective society and that in free enterprise. As Paul Samuelson has said: "it is a tribute to his work that a third of a century after it was written there is no better statement of the problem in the English language to which the attention of the students may be turned."

Yet Barone felt that the equations could be tested only by an experimental approach, for they do not lend themselves to easy calculation. He thought that there were practical difficulties in establishing on paper the necessary numerical equivalents. However, should it be possible to process such data—and in this day of the electronic calculator this is no wild notion—there would be no serious analytical problems to face. The only hesitation that Barone expressed involved the enormous variability of the economic factors, rather than the technical ones. That is to say, as a theoretical matter, socialism was entirely feasible.

IV

The definitive response to the Hayek-Mises broadside was given in the modern welfare approach beginning with Fred M. Taylor's famous 1928 presidential address to the American Economic Association.[9] The principles of this counterattack are relatively uncomplicated. In a socialist society the prices of finished goods as well as those of the factors of production are to be set by a process of trial and error. Equilibrium is reached by so adjusting the prices of these commodities as to eliminate surpluses or deficits. Decisions on output and investment are to be made by plant managers on the assumption that resources will be utilized up to the point at which the cost of producing an additional unit will just be covered by the prevailing unit return. The premise here is that marginal cost will increase with further output, so that production beyond the equality of marginal cost to price would merely incur losses. This is, of course, the short run view: in the long run new investment would be undertaken if the return from the added output would be equal to or even greater than the long period cost incurred.

The objective of this so-called "welfare" approach is to avoid centralizing investment and output decisions. All the Central Planning Board need do is to decide on the total amount to be invested, while the managers guide the direction of investment and output in consonance with the principle just outlined. The demand and supply of capital could be adjusted by the Central Planning Board by altering

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the rate of interest which, contrary to Marxist theory, would become part of long period cost.

Taylor's excellent essay argued that production in a socialist state would be guided in quite the same way as under private enterprise. The state would give its citizens a money income and authorize them to spend it in any way they desired. This assures independence of consumer choice. Taylor, however, makes no comment on the pattern of income distribution, merely assuming that the state, in the interest of maximizing welfare, would so distribute income as to benefit the entire citizenry. The purchases of the citizens would in effect constitute a social judgment. Commodity prices would be based on cost, defined as the "drain on the economic resources of the community," an unfortunately none too clear concept (which becomes even more obscure when Taylor hints that what he has in mind is the drain on primary materials). Capital goods, however, are fully amenable to evaluation by imputation, or derivation from the value of consumer goods. The socialist authorities, said Taylor, should be able to work up "factor valuation tables" which should give satisfactory results in costing items such as sewing machines or drill presses. Argued Taylor: "It would be necessary to multiply the valuation of each factor used in producing that machine by the quantity of that factor so used and add together these different products." The implication was that such a procedure could be easily stated in monetary terms.

An ideal socialism would be impelled by its very nature to guide its actions in accordance with consumer decisions. If prices of output were set at levels higher than the cost of the resources absorbed in their manufacture the citizenry would in effect suffer a diminution of income. Too low a price would lead to shortages. A trial and error solution of price determination would result in a clearing of the market (the economist's equilibrium) and at the same time solve the problem of imputed value for capital goods. Whatever knowledge was available would supply the information for the factor valuation tables; enterprises would conduct their affairs as if the tables were correct; they would observe carefully the results of their decisions and make adjustments as needed. Too high a valuation would induce sparse utilization and lead to factor surplus: a low valuation would create shortages. Taylor concluded confidently "that if the economic authorities of a socialist state would recognize the equality between cost of production on the one hand and the demand price of the buyer on the other as being . . . adequate proof that the commodity in question ought to be produced, they could . . . perform their duties . . . with well founded confidence that they would never make any other than the right use of the economic resources placed at their disposal."

Oskar Lange, a brilliant theoretical economist who spent some years in the U.S. before returning to post-war Poland, supported Taylor's argument with a persuasive series of articles in the *Review*

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of Economic Studies in 1936 and 1937.[10] Lange categorically rejected the contention that economic calculation is impossible in a socialist society. The fact is, said Lange, Mises-Hayek were confused by misreading the function of prices, which are not only ratios of exchange but also general propositions for judging the economic terms on which alternatives are offered. It is the latter concept that has meaning for a socialist society, for it is precisely this notion which has relevance for the problem of allocation. There is no reason why socialism cannot provide the institutional setting for guiding choice and selecting alternatives. The latter would require information regarding how inputs relate to outputs, or what is known as the production function, in order to judge alternatives. But this should not be difficult in a socialist state.

The argument about having to "solve" hundreds of these equations is otiose, says Lange, for Hayek and Mises solve these equations every time they buy a newspaper, as do millions of consumers and doubtless there are few mathematicians among them. The fact is, that even under capitalism trial and error underlies the business of satisfying consumer needs and allocating resources. In a theoretical sense consumers "maximize total utility" by spending their income so that the marginal utility derived from all applications is equal. Producers maximize their profits through achieving an optimum scale of output, which is reached at the point where marginal cost equals price. The fact is that in the competitive situation price must be regarded as a parameter, that is, a variable constant, over which the individual producer has no direct influence. Since it is only in such circumstances that the textbook version of the market really comes into existence, it may be said, somewhat paradoxically, that perfect competition can exist only in a socialist society.

If socialism begins its economic functioning with free consumer choice in the selection of both goods and employment then the Central Planning Board's "artificial" price system represents exactly the same sort of parameter to which producers and consumers would have to react under capitalism. Naturally, different behavior patterns would induce alterations in the parametric set. Producers, instead of pursuing a course which under capitalism is intended to maximize profit, now follow the instructions of the Planning Board. The only rules they must obey are those which require a proper combination of factors so that the scale of production set by the equality of marginal cost to price will be achieved. Furthermore, the lowest average cost of production can be assured if the distribution of resources is such as will make the marginal productivity of inputs equal in all possible uses. The prices of capital goods—again the imputation problem—can be worked out by starting with the historical costs available to the Planning Board when it is created and subsequently working out trial and error adjustments. Errors can be quickly corrected since they would be localized rather than distributed throughout the economy.

Lange does concede that arbitrary decisions regarding the rate of

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interest would be a disadvantage, since this would not necessarily reflect consumer wishes. The Planning Board, in other words, would have to decide for itself an appropriate rate of capital accumulation. Another thorny question stems from the apportionment of labor among the different occupations. Here, the need to balance rewards with "disutilities of work" would lead to unequal incomes, an outcome directly in conflict with the objective of an equal income distribution. Lange would overcome this anomaly by supplying suitable doses of free incomes—leisure, parks, social services and the like—all of which would create the effect of equal income.

Insofar as the political framework was concerned, Lange at that time, did not suggest that the institutional changes he was advocating would abolish private property. In small industry and farming, where competition was still effective, there would be no need to alter property relationships, for all that a socialistic economy should do is to assure, at the very least, a formal competitive system. Where competition already exists there is no need to disturb the situation. However, socialism cannot be brought about by gradual means, argued Lange. It must be done all at once in those areas where it will operate most effectively, or else the "withdrawal of efficiency" by opponents will ensue.

Lange's views on these matters reveal a certain naiveté regarding the complexities involved in achieving a political and economic transformation. The admission that rationing might be employed to supplement the efforts of the Central Planning Board must certainly vitiate the applicability of his rules for governing the economy, for this would necessitate the utilization of output quotas in order to achieve a given production goal. This gives his system an uncomfortable resemblance to the Soviet economic order.

The central problem in the new society, says Lange, is the growth of bureaucracy, which can easily become ossified and inflexible in dealing with subtle matters of economic planning. But he insists, no civilized people would tolerate such a situation (thus quite underestimating the extreme limits to which the human being can be pushed). However, he does score a point in his debate with Mises-Hayek when he argues that to measure the efficiency of a socialist bureaucracy one ought to compare it with the work of corporation officials rather than a capitalist civil service. Socialism, we are told, can create a democratic administrative machinery if it develops an atmosphere of publicity and responsibility.

THERE WERE OTHER economists who developed interesting variants of the Taylor-Lange model, among them Abba P. Lerner, H. D. Dickinson and E. F. M. Durbin. Even Gustav Cassel, the noted Swedish economist and a rather strong opponent of Socialism, was able to demonstrate how a socialist economy might function in his classic *Theory of Social Economy*.[11] Abba Lerner's original ideas were developed in 1936 when he still considered himself to be a socialist and

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was quite anxious to develop marginal analysis for the solution of economic problems in a socialist society. His view was that prices must be so set that resources freed by reduced output would be sufficient to produce an equal sum of another good. That is, no commodity should be produced unless its importance is greater than the alternative which had been foregone. While Lerner acknowledges that the technique for achieving this aim might at best be an approximate one he doubts that this would represent any real impediment.[12]

It was in his *Economics of Control* that Lerner first set forth a positive statement of his views.[13] (The earlier articles were somewhat pedantic quarrels with other writers on definitions of overhead cost, prime cost, and which significant marginal concepts should apply in a socialist state.) The book was begun as a treatise on socialist economics, but in the process of composition Fabian socialist ideas were displaced by New Dealism. Although the work discusses the economics of socialism, the major emphasis is on the theory of control in a capitalist society. Lerner's major objective became an attempt to reveal those operations of the price mechanism which would be applicable to laissez-faire as well as collectivism.

The marginalist rules that are worked out are intended to control both price and output. A basic prerequisite, as in all these systems of diffused control, is freedom of action and choice in both commodity and factor markets. The guiding rule is a simple one: factory managers are to be instructed to increase output so long as the value of the marginal product of any factor is greater than its price. In actuality, the problem would be a good deal more complicated than Lerner's rule suggests, for in putting the matter this way the operational difficulties were simply pushed to one side. Furthermore, combining the factors of production and establishing rules for setting price policy are really distinct matters, but in Lerner"s guide book these were subsumed in a single set of "instructions."

Lerner argues that his is a middle of the road economics, quite neutral in its political implications. The economics of control suggest, however, that governments have the responsibility to see to it that all resources are properly employed, that monopoly is minimized and income distributed in the most efficacious manner. The latter, it is said, will be at an optimum when it is no longer possible to increase welfare or satisfactions by further shifting goods among the citizenry. At this point the marginal substitutability of goods would be equal for all. It is not clear how goods would be exchanged in Lerner's scheme, although barter arises as a possibility. A money economy might be instituted through the distribution of a proper numéraire. Again, satisfactions could be increased by shifting incomes about from those whose usefulness for money is less to those whose utility is greater.

Now, the Central Planning Board would doubtless discover how intricate the task is to compare the value of marginal products, presumably necessary to judge relative efficiencies. The best way out of

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the dilemma is to simply allow plant managers to price output according to ordinary markets procedures. The planning board would still have enough work to do, says Lerner wryly, in supervising managerial operations. But the main point, he avers, is that individuals would be induced to pursue those economic measures that in themselves result in social gains. This gets quite close to Adam Smith's invisible hand. Says Lerner, "... every individual in trying to minimize his own sacrifice of alternatives when he spends his money income to his own best advantage, is led automatically and even unconsciously to minimize the social sacrifice in producing what gives him most satisfaction." Yet Lerner does acknowledge that private enterprise as constituted today cannot fulfill the requirements of "optimum allocation"; monopoly, advertising and product differentiation set up barriers which impede the attainment of welfare. The objective of the controlled economy, therefore would be to work toward the conditions necessary for achieving an optimum. This, then, brings Lerner around to the very "competitive solution" from which he originally demurred, for only by assuring that market impediments would not arise could the Central Planning Board point toward a welfare goal.

PERHAPS THE FINAL WORD on the kind of socialism we are discussing was given by Joseph A. Schumpeter.[14] He begins by asking, "Can socialism work?" and his answer is: "Of course it can." "No doubt is possible about that," he continues, "once we assume, first that the requisite stage of industrial development has been reached and second, that transitional problems can be successfully resolved." Schumpeter's institutional setup includes a Central Planning Board, although there might be a parliament or other elective body to set basic policy. He also assumes that plant managers would need some degree of freedom to decide on production: in fact, a socialist economy could not function effectively until a *modus vivendi* had been established between managerial latitude and central control. Yet of all the writers on this problem, Schumpeter, whose abhorrence for socialism was well known, was the only one to realize that the new society had to be more than a matter of the full stomach: socialism, he held, implied a new kind of human being, toward the development of which economics was no great help. In fact, he said, reflecting his concept of economics as neutralist mechanics, the principles of a socialist economy could hold for any kind of society, so long as the marginalist rules were observed.

Technically speaking, the basic question is whether the economic data of socialism would permit the formulation of equations which are consistent and sufficient in number to permit for a solution of all the unknowns. To Schumpeter there is no question but that this is entirely possible. Insofar as the Lange-Mises debate is concerned, it is the latter who is in error. Schumpeter grants that under socialism political decisions will guide the initial distribution of income. In a completely egalitarian society income will be divided evenly: but a

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less than completely egalitarian socialism is also conceivable. Whatever the pattern is, the Central Planning Board need only see to it that all the vouchers distributed are equal to the total available consumer goods. The Central Planning Board would allocate basic resources to individual plants on condition that managers pursue economical means and follow marginal principles in their pricing policies. Enterprises will know what their production schedules should be as soon as prices are announced and consumer demand is known. The Central Planning Board has only to set prices at that level which would clear the market; naturally, this would be in accordance with the marginalist rule, for "as long as this rule is being observed no element of productive resources can be devoted to any other line of production without causing destruction of as much consumer's values, expressed in terms of consumer's dollars, as that element would add to its new employment."

Schumpeter stressed the point, often voiced by 19th century socialists, that a socialist society to be successful, ought to inherit from its capitalist predecessor a full endowment of skills, experience and techniques. That is to say, a socialist society should follow a mature capitalism. Again, as did Lange, Schumpeter saw bureaucracy as a major problem. It is inevitable that such a society would require a large number of administrators. But despite the serious administrative problems stemming from a flowering of government staff, socialism could still function more effectively than capitalism, for the very element that absorbs the full energy of the capitalist, uncertainty, will have been abolished. No longer would plant operations have to be predicated on the probability of rival operations, for these would be known through the Central Planning Board. There would be no waste of resources or delays in timing and the reserves for conducting economic warfare, so characteristic of a capitalist economy, would be eliminated. The Central Board could also adjust its investment program so that the trade cycle would become an archaic phenomenon. In fact, the "...socialist management could attain [its goal] with less disturbance and loss without necessarily incurring the disadvantages that would attend attempts at planning progress within the framework of capitalist institutions." It is Schumpeter's contention that socialism could be as superior to big business capitalism as the latter is to the 18th century competitive system.

Socialist rationality, continued Schumpeter, is superior to capitalist rationality: technological improvements in a capitalist society must simmer through the economy via gradual adoption by individual firms, while under socialism such improvements can be adopted simultaneously by all enterprises. But above all, the saving in cost through the elimination of economic strife would be enormous. In fact, society might very well spare the work of some occupations, such as that of lawyers, for in the absence of private property and capitalism's typically complex tax structure, what would they have to do? There would be no demi-gods about, only ordinary citizens. The clerk would still look

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at a Sunday football game through socialist TV while experts, professionals and politicians would abound. It is even possible that a socialist bureaucracy might develop useful incentives that would not hamper the proper functioning of the economy. But the chief merit of a socialism rooted in welfare concepts lies in its clear revelation of the true nature of economic phenomena, something all too obscure in capitalism.

V

One might have thought that Schumpeter's approach would have met with the approval of even those for whom Marx has always had the last word. But this, unfortunately, is not the case. Marginalism, opportunity cost and consumer choice have always exemplified mere bourgeois prejudice to orthodox Marxists. Such writers as Maurice Dobb, Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy, knowledgeable as they are in the ways of ordinary economics, reject welfare theorems as thoroughly unsuitable to a socialist economy. For them, the assumption of consumer sovereignty is somewhat silly, since lopsided distribution of income makes "voting" in the market a patently uneven affair. Welfare socialism could not overcome this condition since some trades would be receiving more income by virtue of a higher social valuation of their output or because of greater relative scarcity. This would merely perpetuate uneven income distribution, they say. In fact, equal incomes, say these critics, would simply distort the cost structure unless a system of bounties and taxes were instituted. For these reasons, says Dobb, competitive socialism is an illusion. The determination of priorities in production through marginalist analysis, he insists, is unnecessary, for it may be essential for socialism to invest as heavily as possible in capital goods. What Dobb suggests is that the socialist economy forego present needs in the interest of building up future satisfactions; there is no other meaning which can be given to his advice than that the planning authorities "violate the principle of equimarginal returns and apply a different time discount to different sections of an industry."[15]

That this is a theoretical justification for Soviet experience is inescapable. Paul Baran's reaction to welfare socialism is even sharper, if less subtle. He simply dismisses it as irrelevant, for it is an unwarranted assertion to say that the kind of "welfare" stemming from capitalism is equivalent to that of a socialist state.[16] The values and aims, he argues, which determine economic choice, are conditioned by the features of a particular social system. Hence, no purpose can be served by establishing socialist optimums which are borrowed almost in their entirety from an individualistic economics.

In Baran's view, socialist will not be based on consumer sovereignty. Since he takes the Soviet economy as a model, it is necessary to grant him this premise. One can only question whether sovietism is genuine socialism, for as Baran concedes, the state would have to

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mould consumer choice ".... in the interest of the community as a whole." Change, he insists, requires compulsion. Opportunity cost is of no aid in working up major decisions regarding the proper choice "among the few technological alternatives involving large indivisibilities and fixed coefficients." Unfortunately for Mr. Baran's thesis, some leading Russian economists have been stumbling toward opportunity cost notions. The systems of priorities could not be worked out via the labor theory and they have had to devise techniques which can only be described as virtually marginalist. The Baran-Dobb attitude merely explains why economic theory has progressed so little in the Soviet Union.

DOBB IS EVEN MORE CENTRALIST in his views than Baran. In an early essay he insisted that socialist economics could be discussed only in terms of the Soviet scheme of things.[17] Since capitalist class relations are done away with, the coordination of production must be more direct than the market allows. Welfare socialism means a diffusion of decisions and consequently a diffusion of results so that the old tendency to disequilibrium would be simply carried over. But why this should be so, Dobb seldom makes clear. His concern is to justify the Soviet crash program and to this end he develops a theory of investment saturation. Decisions must be made centrally, for action by individual enterprises would only lead to uneven development. Ordinarily, saving, consumption and income are the outcomes of disconnected acts, but with planning these are all "separate facets of a single decision." Thus, there is no need for the Central Planning Board to follow the competitive solution, for this would only duplicate capitalist calamities. Consumer choice, argues Dobb, is not a reliable guide, for individual desire may easily conflict with social requirements. Moreover, he says, the presumption that consumer choice would be any more rational under welfare socialism than under capitalism is unwarranted. Choice under competitive conditions, says Dobb, reveals a bias toward a greater variety of goods than is necessary for the collective interest. The result is a kind of Gresham's law of taste in which the baser satisfactions begin to dominate the social outlook. Thus, consumer sovereignty does not necessarily imply the development of desirable goals, it is averred.

But as Abba Lerner remarked, Dobb seems to be searching for a transcendental optimum in which an attempt would be made to create an ethic of social behavior based on some kind of undefined collective consensus. Why such collective choices should be superior to individual action is not made clear. Nor is Dobb able to specify the nature of economic law in his centralist socialism, unless it be *diktat* from the top administrative body, as with the Soviets. At best, we learn only that economic law is concerned with how man handles materials, a trite and none too informed proposition. The analysis of the relation of wage income to the value of consumer goods is little more than a restatement of Marx's surplus value theory in the phraseology of re-

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ceipts and costs. Dobb's main point is that production requires a proper balance between component elements at different points of time, so that each stage of production is defined as part of the process of making a finished commodity in the distant future. Aside from the fact that this is as much a technological as it is an economic problem, it also offers a neat justification for a policy of applying up to one-fourth of national output to gross investment. Needless to say, the kind of socialism which Dobb found so attractive before the war has hardly come up to the expectation that its primary concern would be humanity.

Dobb's version of the socialist scheme begins with a set of equations in which wages equal consumption goods and "profit" is equal to a certain share of consumer goods. The Central Planning Board is concerned mainly with technological decisions: the size of plants, their number and location, the labor input and the like. Investment, says Dobb, can be self-financing, for when a price is set for investment goods, wages will tend to increase because of the resulting increased demand, causing prices to rise. The consequent "profit" can be used to finance further investment. But the Planning Board cannot follow the marginalist principle in doing all this, he says, for then the amount of employment would be governed entirely by the investment process. This would mean that adjustments in the labor force would depend solely on the operation of impersonal marginalist relationships rather than on the will of the Planning Board and consequently would be "clearly irrational." Decisions on alternative investment possibilities should be made by inspection. All the Board need do is to work out the ratio of productivity to the cost of a project and in this way work up a list of priorities which would enable it to plan investment over the long period. This would eliminate uncertainty; control would be maintained over key decisions rather than diffused through the economy; high standards of production can be established; new plants would produce new goods rather than duplicate old ones; and "unnecessary" products would be forbidden.

Quite obviously, Dobb and Baran prefer a "command economy." In their view socialism cannot function unless it is highly centralized with all the decisions predetermined by some planning board. No choice is to be allowed to people, and the putative higher requirements of the state are to dominate even unto the exclusion of the rights of the public to decide for itself its own fate. The subtlety of the argument is not denied and the technical effectiveness of a command economy has been well demonstrated by Russian industrial achievements. But it is an argument for totalitarianism nevertheless. That it has anything to do with socialist ethics and socialist values is doubtful. Simply enough, socialism can no longer be discussed purely in economic terms. In fact, it seems reasonable to suggest that the way in which a socialist economy works must be in consonance with the moral and political aims that socialists seek to attain. In such a framework the competitive solution of market socialism seems by far the more desirable objective.

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Even the economic arguments in its favor are impressive: freedom of choice to consumers; a minimum of controls over plant managers; the utilization of pecuniary incentives for socialist purposes; the minimizing of failures through "trial and error" procedures; the reduction of inequality of income; and above all, the elimination of instability and unemployment. The recent history of Britain and Scandinavia suggest that there is validity in these arguments.

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3 *cf.* Wieser's *Social Economics,* New York, 1927, Espec. jg. 185 *ff.*
4 Second edition, New Haven, 1951.
5 *cf.* F. A. von Hayek, ed., *Collectivist Economic Planning,* London, 1935.
6 *cf. idem. Individualism and the Economic Order,* Chicago, 1948, Especially Chapter IV.
7 Paris, 2 volumes, 1902-03. *cf.* also Pareto's *Manuel d'Economique Politique,* Paris, 1907.
8 Reprinted in *Collectivist Economic Planning,* pg. 245 *ff.*
9 Reprinted in *On the Economic Theory of Socialism,* Minneapolis, 1938.
10 Reprinted, *op. cit.* pg. 57 *ff.*
11 Originally published 1918, translated New York, 1924. Other noteworthy discussions may be found in James E. Meade, *Planning and the Price Mechanism,* New York, 1949; E. F. M. Durbin, *Problems of Economic Planning,* London, 1949; W. A. Lewis, *Principles of Economic Planning,* London, 1949; Carl Landauer, *Theory of National Economic Planning,* Berkeley, 1944; and B. P. Beckwith, *Marginal Cost Price—Output Control,* New York, 1955. Space limitations do not permit a detailed discussion of these writers.
12 A. P. Lerner, *Essays in Economic Analysis,* London, 1953, pg. 38 *ff.*
13 New York, 1944.
14 *cf.* his *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy,* New York, 1942, pg. 167 *ff.*
15 Maurice Dobb, *On Economic Theory and Socialism,* London, 1955, pg. 38 *ff.*
16 *cf.* Baran's essay on economic planning in *Survey of Contemporary Economics,* Homewood, 1952, Vol. II, pg. 355 *ff.*
17 *cf.* his *Political Economy and Capitalism,* London, 1937, pg. 273.

"Free Enterprise"

"FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT set up TVA as a 'yardstick' to measure utility charges. You can see why big business hates it. It was the first large-scale experiment in planned economy, and a candid test of socialism in the realm of public utilities. No wonder the White House, which invented the abortive Dixon-Yates deal to try to crimp TVA, is expected to veto the bill to allow TVA to issue $750 million worth of bonds to finance its expansion. The House passed the bill last week.

"The TVA thorn constantly pricks business. Recently TVA had the bad grace to expose identical bids submitted to it on three different occasions by 'competitive' corporations. The bids were identical right down to the last decimal point. Example: TVA asked for bids on electrical cable. It got one price, '$198,438.24' from the General Cable Co., Southwire Co., Aluminum Company of America, Kaiser Aluminum, Anaconda Wire, Reynolds Metal and Southern Electrical Co."—*The New Republic,* May 25, 1959.

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MANAGEMENT AND BUREAUCRACY IN THE RUSSIAN FACTORY

Seymour Melman

A major legend of Soviet ideology has it that the rule over production in the USSR is qualitatively different from that of private capitalism. In *Factory and Manager in the U.S.S.R.*,* Professor Joseph Berliner of Syracuse University has written a most valuable study of the actual operating conditions in the Soviet factory; and the facts he advances show that, for many purposes, the similarities between modes of management at the plant level under private (Western) and state (Russian) capitalism are at least as important as the differences.

In preparing his book Professor Berliner made use of data derived from interviews with emigres who had once been managers and technicians in Soviet factories. Their accounts of their job experiences were then extensively supplemented and thus "controlled' by information culled from Soviet journals—so that it is impossible to dismiss this material on the ground that it comes from "hostile" sources.

It is the similarities in managerial rule that are most striking, yet to understand them one has first to glance at some of the differences. Because of the scarcity of virtually all kinds of consumer goods as well as capital goods, selling products has not been a problem in Russia. The energies devoted in the United States to selling have in Russia largely gone into procurement, though similar techniques have been evolved for these different ends.

A second major difference between Soviet and, say, American conditions of management is the absence of autonomous worker organizations in Russia. The Russian trade unions being substantially company unions, management is seldom impeded by the claims of freely-operating organizations that parallel its own lines of decision in the productive process.

Thirdly, the Soviet manager, unlike his equivalent in the West, has functioned under close political and police surveillance. Within the factories there have systematically operated "parallel organizations" of the party and the police assigned to check on managerial performance and guard against "subversive," i.e., independent, action by the workers.

Finally, the hierarchical rule of management in Russia is organized from the factory floor to the pinnacle of national power. It is as though the whole of an economy consisted of vast firms like General Motors, all of them controlled by the cen-

* Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1957. 386 pp. $7.50.

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tral office of a superfirm whose management is finally found in the highest political body of the country.

As Berliner describes it, the Soviet manager has had to work toward several simultaneous, but not always harmonious, goals: He must fulfill the physical production targets; he must carry out operations within the limits of a financial budget and produce the budgeted profit; and he must also attain other targets shown in the plan, e.g., improvements in labor productivity, economies in utilization of raw materials, etc.

Looming above all else is the pressure to fulfill the relentlessly expanding production plan. Substantial bonus payments to both management and the workers of the firm help at times to stimulate this fulfillment. Promotions within and outside the firm are based substantially on the manager's ability to reach output quotas. While attention is given to the cost and financial aspects of the plan, success is achieved when the physical plan has been carried out within acceptable limits of variation in the cost and financial categories. The reader may recall that this view of managerial attainment is rather similar to the pattern in many U.S. defense industries, especially under wartime conditions. Here too, first priority has been given to fulfillment of the physical output requirement, with cost and allied considerations given second priority. This feature, as well as the problems of pervasive industrial shortages, indicate a major characteristic of Soviet industrial economy: *it has operated as though it were a permanent war economy.*

The central role of the physical output plan, and the readiness to use many kinds of manipulation to achieve it have thus come to be decisive in shaping the character of managerial practice.

IN THE TABLE of organization of each enterprise there is provided a whole range of staff specialists for carrying out the kinds of functions which are recognized in a U.S. or English business-managed firm as necessary both for decision-making and for production. The parallels to business enterprise under private management are both numerous and significant. But once we turn to the occupational performance of these Russian specialists, we observe certain features specific to a Soviet managerial system working under the stresses of a sustained war economy and an unrelenting predatory competition between the units of that economy.

The promised rewards for achieving output goals—and threatened penalties for missing them—have driven Soviet managers to devise an intricate array of ingenious devices for getting around problems of shortages, for handling difficulties never anticipated in the formal plan, and for simulating the fulfillment of targets. Done with the collaboration of accountants and engineers in the given firm, who also have a stake in the appearance of fulfilled goals, this has become a systematized feature of Soviet economic life:

> There is no shortage of evidence on the prevalence of this form of simulation. "The director of the Stalin Kiev Boat Repair Yards, Comrade Tikhienko, exaggerated his 1953 report by 683,000 rubles and thus reported that his annual plan had been fulfilled 100 per cent." Director Burdin of Factory Number Two of the Moscow City Leather Footwear Trust found himself in a worse position at the

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end of 1951. "He announced that the December plan has been fulfilled 110.8 per cent when it had actually been fulfilled only 73.9 per cent." But while there is abundant qualitative evidence, it is more difficult to estimate the extensiveness of the practice. One of the most reliable informants expressed his judgment in these words:

"The Soviet system of enterprise administration, the method of calculating the degree of success of the work of the enterprise and the system of financial operations are founded upon an enormous amount of falsification in all branches of production and in their accounting systems. Not a single enterprise, if it worked in full accord with all orders and decrees of the government and planning organs, would be able to function without interruption. Every day, for the sake of production, the official norms are violated, everywhere there is evasion, false figures, untrue reports, and so forth." (Informant 90.)

Formal reports have indicated the production of goods that in fact never were completed.

> Sometimes at the end of the quarter the market-output plan was fulfilled only 90 per cent. No one wanted to send a telegram like this to the ministry, or else the director and the Party secretary may both be brought up on charges. So they would take part of the gross output and include it with the market output in order to raise the figure for market output. This was plain swindling. (Informant 388.)

Another device—also tantamount to "plain swindling"—is to report the output of sub-standard quality ogods as part of acceptable materials for shipment. Materials in process may be listed as finished goods. Goods to be produced during a subsequent period are reported as already having been produced. Sometimes, however, tactical needs may dictate the underreporting of output:

> Sometimes the plan is deliberately underfulfilled. This may happen once or twice a year. They underfulfill it because they want to remove any suspicion that might arise if the plan is fulfilled every single month. The purpose of this is to give the assistant commissar the impression that he is really putting pressure upon the enterprise. Because if month after month the plan is fulfilled, then the commissar might crack down upon them. But if in some months the plan is not fulfilled, then it will seem like a very hard program. They are willing to give a few months' premiums for this. And the director agrees also. . . .

Plant managers have been known to enlarge inventories of raw materials and to try to reduce plant production programs, in order to create "safety factors" by which additional assurance can be given for a later fulfillment of production plans.

ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT sections of Berliner's book is the discussion of wage and allied labor practices. Because they have often been under severe pressure to enlarge outputs, managements respond with extensive efforts to retain and recruit workers. This means that the job has to be made acceptable, or even attractive, so as to enable them to "pirate" workers from other plants.

Workers, in turn, since they could not negotiate with management through representatives of their own choice, have utilized the pervasive labor shortage as a means of tacit pressure upon management.

> The shortage of labor created . . . uncertainty in the supply of labor power for the planning period.

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> Connected with this was a feverish state of affairs in filling up their planned contingent of workers, rather than concentrating on a better organization of production and labor. In addition some managers tried to secure their enterprises with labor and embarked on the antistate course of illegal increase in wages by means of all sorts of increased job valuations, surpayments, and so forth, thus adding to the great mobility of the labor force.
>
> As a result of the labor shortage, labor pirating was widely reported in the prewar press and managers were criticized for the "intolerable practice of recruiting labor at the gates of neighboring plants, and tempting people with higher wages." The aggressive competition for labor aggravated the problem of workers "flitting" from job to job in search of "the long ruble."

Similar conditions have made it possible for workers to press for higher earnings. Though formally bound by a wage budget, managements found various devices for raising worker earnings while keeping formal wage structures intact.

> Said Informant 65, "We had particular trouble with the women's brigade. They had the easiest jobs, yet they never earned the full amount which was due them. Therefore we had to spend much time in various forms of deceit, write out different work orders, give them makeshift jobs to increase their pay." There appear to be established views among the workers as to what constitutes a "fair" income, and the foremen were under pressure from their men to pad the wage bill with various fictitious jobs. Malenkov called attention to "the following corrupt practice: after having provided an incentive for the good workers, they artificially raise up to their level the wages of those groups of workers who lag in productivity, who do not improve their skills, and who do not fulfill their output norms."
>
> A work order may be given to a worker for some job which has never actually been performed. Some officials find it unnecessary to take the trouble to cover up such activities; for example, one periodical reported "Last month twenty workers in this plant were paid over 2,700 rubles by work orders without numbers on them, for some unidentified work." Most of them, however, manifest considerable ingenuity in finding appropriate jobs to enter on these false work orders as having been done. "We say that water must be pumped out somewhere, or that the materials must be brought in from a further distance than they really are. We often ascribe to a man work which he did not do at all. For example, we say that he had to carry materials and we use a false work order. We draw up a special work order for sweeping the floors or cleaning up." (Informant 202.) On construction projects the famous Russian winter provides a most natural pretext—snow shoveling; judging from the work orders for shoveling snow, commented an informant, "it would seem that all the snows of Siberia fell on our project." . . .

These industrial practices give the clue to why total paid wages have tended to be higher than the planned wages fund of Soviet industry. Orthodox theoreticians of planned economies do not devote much attention to this matter: It is an embarrassing deviation from their schemes. Their theories do not include occupational class as a significant category; and class differences, as expressed in bargaining conditions of work are not supposed to exist! An important merit of Berliner's book is, therefore, that it gives sufficient data to show

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that worker decision-making on production, as a by-product of their efforts to improve their conditions of employment, will have to be included as a regular element in studying factory and management in the USSR.

SOME OF THE MOST INTRIGUING details given by Berliner pertain to the practices of *blat* and the *tolkach*. *Blat* refers to "influence." Influence is obtained in many ways, many of them quite familiar in private business firms. Personal relations with people are used in order to get such favors as delivery of scarce materials. Bribery is extensively employed in the Soviet economy in order to get necessary action in the behalf of one's firm. This activity, in turn, is frequently carried out by the *tolkach* who is a kind of Soviet "five-per-center," an expediter, equipped with expense account funds, sent out by firms to get materials and speed deliveries. His manager, in turn, is interested in the results and not in the devices he may use to reach them.

Professor Berliner's book is rich with materials of this kind, but there is no space for further quotation. I should mention, however, his neat contrast between the conditions of labor under Soviet industrialization and the conditions of the workers under early English industrialization, as the latter was described by Marx —a parallel, by the way, that even includes the *Stakhanovite* techniques for setting work standards.

Anyone interested in these matters will want to examine the original manuscript of Professor Berliner's book which is on file at the Harvard University library as a doctoral dissertation and therefore available on inter-library loan. The closing chapter of that dissertation includes a valuable analysis which gives a broad comparison of similarities in managerial modes of behavior in the United States, Russia and Germany. It is a pity that this material did not appear in the published volume, since it is of great interest and deserves elaboration.

Finally, Berliner's analysis of Soviet management compels one to ask: Are there alternatives to the managerial mode of decision-making over industrial production? Many people have held to the view that there is something in the very nature of production technology and the size of industrial plants which, both in the capitalist West and the Communist East, precludes democratic mass participation and requires a managerial, hierarchical rule over industrial work. From the standpoint of everyone interested in a free society it is important to know whether there are workable, efficient alternatives to managerial rule over production; whether the modes of management we have in both Russia and the United States are the consequence of particular social arrangements or are inherent in "the nature of things." I have tried in a recent book (*Decision-Making and Productivity,* published by John Wiley*) to demonstrate that there are realistic alternatives to managerial rule over production. This is not the place to rehearse the arguments of that book; it is the place to commend Professor Berliner for a careful study which shows the reality of Soviet economic life, especially at a moment when all sorts of extravagant delusions are once again in the air.

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* We hope to review this book in a forthcoming issue of DISSENT.—Editors

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CONSERVATISM AND THE MEDIEVAL MIND

David Spitz

If some of the more extravagant reviews of Bertrand de Jouvenel's *Sovereignty** are to be believed, this book is nothing less than a classic. The London *Times Literary Supplement* proclaimed it "a remarkable achievement . . . a great work in political philosophy." Even Denis Brogan, who seemed unwilling to go quite this far, asserted in the New York *Times* that "every page of this brilliant and successful effort . . . is loaded with ore."

I do not believe that Jouvenel's book merits these accolades, but I can think of at least three reasons to account for them. The first is that the concept of sovereignty has for a good many years been relegated to the backwater of political theory. Not since the savage assault on sovereignty in the early books of Harold Laski has anyone working within the liberal tradition attempted to make constructive use of this concept. To have the concept explored anew, and by a man working within what he at least conceives to be the liberal or democratic tradition, is an almost startling event. Whether in point of fact Jouvenel contributes to our understanding of sovereingty, whether he advances his own political theory through its use, is a matter on which I will have something to say a little later.

A second reason for the reception given Jouvenel's book is that it is one of the few attempts at a systematic treatise in the conservative mood. Because conservatives wish to conserve not all things, but only those things that are good, they require above all else what they do not now have—a rational principle or standard by which to distinguish the good from the bad *and* by which they can come seriously to grips with concrete problems. It serves no real purpose, for example, to agree that we must do good and avoid evil; for however meritorious this moral stance may be, it offers no specific guides to right behavior in a particular situation. Jouvenel's book is important, therefore, as a sophisticated effort to provide such a principle.

Finally, Jouvenel's *Sovereignty* stands in that tradition of political philosophy which is concerned, as he puts it, with the uses rather than the sources of power. What is crucial, in his view, is not the way in which power is gained, nor the principle of consent as a legitimate source of power, but the ends for which power is employed, the idea of justice or the public good. Accordingly, he criticizes democratic theory for relying on the process through which power-holders are chosen rather than on the intrinsic

* *Sovereignty: An Inquiry into the Political Good,* by Bertrand de Jouvenel. Translated by J. F. Huntington. University of Chicago Press. $4.50.

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qualities and purposes of the power-holders themselves. He indicts democratic theory for looking to public opinion—which in this tradition is identified with the inferior judgments of average, and therefore inferior, men—instead of trusting to the wisdom of superior men, of those who know what is good and how best to achieve it.

In these respects Jouvenel's book appeals to an important, though not controlling, portion of the intellectual community.

I

Let us start with the stated purpose of Jouvenel's book. This, he tells us, is to inquire into the political good. But it is not really so; for to inquire into the political good presupposes at the outset that the political good is already known, else one cannot know what he seeks or recognize it when it appears. Then his quest is rather for the conditions that make possible the attainment and perpetuation of the political good. But such a quest is intelligible only if we assume that knowledge of such conditions can lead to the improvement of deficient societies; and this assumption Jouvenel cannot—for reasons I will discuss later—readily accept. In one place, in fact, he follows Burke rather than the classical political philosophers in arguing to the contrary that reason can enable us to *discover* but not to *bring about* the political good. "The forms making for stability," he writes (and stability, for Jouvenel, is the crux of the political good), "partake of necessity, not will" (p. 25). But Jouvenel does not really believe this either; for if men can only understand but not control their history, his own book—which is avowedly a manual for statesmen—becomes a senseless enterprise. And if there is anything that Jouvenel intends, it is to make prescription rather than description the object of political science. This implies that rulers can both know and act in accordance with the political good, and Jouvenel makes it abundantly clear that he wants them to do so, even, let it be emphasized, against the wishes of a majority of the people. Reason, then, can and should govern the behavior of states. But whose reason? And to what ends?

Here we come to the heart of Jouvenel's argument, and it would be pleasant to record that at this juncture Jouvenel is unmistakably coherent and clear. Unfortunately, this is not the case. For Jouvenel is rent between the realities of power and the mystique of justice, and his answers to these questions reflect his underlying uncertainties.

He begins, simply enough, by asserting the superior claim of stability. As a man who loves order and respects customary usages, he wants "an authority aimed at keeping things in place" (p. 46); he insists that the sovereign's duty is above all else to maintain the existing equilibrium. Only in this way, he believes, can the benefits of human cooperation be secured. But what if the existing equilibrium is unjust? What if it is a totalitarian order? Here Jouvenel offers conflicting answers. Because he loathes totalitarian government, he cannot and does not approve *any* equilibrium, *any* form of human cooperation. He argues instead for the equilibrium of an open society.

But an open society is a society in flux, an equilibrium (if it is an equilibrium) in constant process of adjustment; and change, it is clear, may lead a society in the wrong as well as in the right direction. Jouvenel needs,

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then, a true conception of the right social order if he is to argue on other than arbitrary grounds that conservation is the first obligation of the public authorities. Such a conception, however, he tells us, is a utopian dream; "it is impossible to establish a just social order" (p. 164). Then any equilibrium, any form of human cooperation, including a totalitarian one, must be good in itself; and if so, all change is evil.

This, however, will not do; for Jouvenel believes that some novelty is good, and that to govern justly the sovereign must alter the existing equilibrium by adopting such changes as will promote the public good. But if the public good is equated with the maintenance of the existing equilibrium, then all novelty must be scorned. To admit some changes, Jouvenel requires a standard other than the equilibrium itself; he needs an external norm by which he can judge which of many proposed changes are desirable, which of alternative orders or equilibriums are valuable.

This standard, says Jouvenel, is the natural law. It is also, he adds, the established customs. But these are not always compatible standards; in a particular situation they may even stand in direct opposition to each other. For the first—natural law—is an appeal to principle, to an allegedly objective criterion independent of group or national practice. The second is an appeal to subjective experience, to what communities have done and believed. But what communities have done and believed is precisely what disturbs Jouvenel and has motivated him to write his book; for he is convinced that they have indulged, by and large, in the wrong things.

In particular, he is distressed by the trust that modern democratic states have put in public opinion, in the rule of the majority. This he regards as both unwarranted and as a perversion of democracy: unwarranted because the masses of the people are customarily driven by their private passions rather than by a concern for the good of the whole; a perversion because true democracy requires action exercised in accordance with the needs, not the desires, of the people. What Jouvenel proposes instead is a reliance on the sovereign Will, which both desires and knows the public good.

Now, to decry the rule of public opinion is an old if still fashionable preoccupation. From Plato through Madison and Tocqueville and John Stuart Mill to theorists of our own day, much emphasis has been placed, and properly so, on the dangers ensuing from the "tyranny of the majority" and the "passions" of the multitude. What democratic theorists in replying need contend, however, is not that these dangers do not exist but that they are universal. Majority rule, after all, is in one sense a necessary reply to the tyranny of the minority, a tyranny which has governed mankind far longer, and with more disastrous results, than any alleged tyrant of the majority. And who can read history without an awareness of the crimes and follies of passionate rulers, whether they be kings or self-styled aristocracies? What Jouvenel must do, if his argument is to have relevance, is to demonstrate empirically that majorities are more prone than are minorities to invidious acts, that majorities but not minorities—at least, not the "right" minorities—pursue their private interests rather than the common good. And this he does

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not show. He contents himself instead with assertions to the contrary. But asssertions are not evidence; they are conclusions to be derived from the evidence. And here, I suggest, Jouvenel, who talks much of history, ignores history.

For men possessed of power, it is clear, tend to pursue their private good as they conceive it; and this, curiously, Jouvenel in one place concedes to be a natural rather than a monstrous phenomenon (p. 94). Does it follow, however, that such men are oblivious to the common or public good? Or that the pursuit of one's private good is evil? I do not think so. For, in the one case, there are many things—e.g., education, religion, the maintenance of a peaceful social order, etc.—which men can customarily enjoy only in common; here the pursuit of one's private good is of necessity a quest for the common good as well. And in the other case, unless men are to be thrust into a common mold, they must be free to pursue *some* different, even dividing, interests. If, moreover, it is "natural," as Jouvenel contends, for men to use their power for their particular ends, it is only on the basis of some "unnatural" or artificial standard that such natural action can be condemned. But Jouvenel's standard, as we have seen, is nature; from which it must follow that what is natural is right, not wrong. To argue otherwise, Jouvenel must appeal not to nature but to a standard outside of nature, say, to convention or God. But convention, as we have noted, is a subjective and shifting and therefore improper criterion; hence Jouvenel must turn to God. And this is what he ultimately does. He falls back on the precepts of the "natural law," as these (in his interpretation) derive from God.

It is the incorporation of these precepts in the edicts of the ruler that constitutes, for Jouvenel, the sovereign Will, and gives a ruler a legitimate claim to be called sovereign. A number of questions, however, quickly come to the fore. In the first place, who or what embodies this sovereign Will, and how do we recognize it? Secondly, how do we know that it both knows and desires the public good? Further, what assurance have we that it *will* act in conformity with this knowledge? Finally, *should* it act on the basis of such knowledge?

II

To all these questions Jouvenel offers contradictory or circular answers. The sovereign Will, he says, embodies these precepts because it is through the embodiment of these precepts that it becomes the sovereign Will. Whatever tends to destroy sovereignty is beyond the competence of the sovereign; he has no power to do evil; he cannot do what ill accords with his own end. Hence the sovereign, who is all-powerful, is paradoxically enjoined by his powerlessness from comitting wrong. This is the meaning of Jouvenel's insistence that the sovereign can only will what is just and reasonable; for if he wills otherwise he must be deemed not to have willed it (pp. 204-5, 209-10). But who apart from him who is called sovereign is to say whether the sovereign has willed what he should not will? If it is someone other than the sovereign, this other is in fact the sovereign; while if it is the sovereign himself, there can be no appeal to a force outside of him. Then the argument is circular or tautologous, for it asserts only that the sovereign wills what he ought to will, for

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if he does not will what he ought to will he is not sovereign. I do not see that this furthers our understanding, or helps us locate the sovereign Will.

To the second question there are two sorts of answers. On the one hand, *we* cannot know that the sovereign Will both knows and desires the public good, for *we,* since we are outside the sovereign and thus of the mass, are incompetent precisely by our exclusion to know these things. If we could know them, we would be part of the sovereign Will; and since we are not of the sovereign Will, we cannot know them. This leads, then, to the obvious alternative: namely, that the sovereign Will knows and desires the public good precisely because it *is* the sovereign Will. But this, too, is a circular and therefore unconvincing argument.

The third and fourth questions must be taken together. Jouvenel seems to argue, in keeping with the Socratic tradition, that right knowledge compels right action, and that the sovereign Will, because it knows what is right, should and will do what is right. He even asserts, in Rousseau-like fashion, that such action, because it accords with the needs rather than with the desires of the people, is democratic. Now democracy is a word that historically is neither clear nor unambiguous, and if Jouvenel means to use it as he does he has literal license to do so. But what must be noted is that such a definition is alien to the ordinary use of the term in Western societies, a usage that may be epitomized by Mill's *Representative Government* and that is articulated in our own day in the writings of such men as A. D. Lindsay, Ernest Barker, and R. M. MacIver.

Moreover, if democracy is to be defined by the *results* of the acts of the public authorities, there is no way to distinguish democratic from oligarchic states; for even a dictatorship, it is clear, may on occasion serve the needs of its people. The real test, of course, turns on the question, who is to determine the needs as distinct from the desires of the people? If it is the ruler, then all states can claim to be democratic; and on this basis certain totalitarian dictatorships have ventured precisely this claim. But if it is the people themselves, then not the result but the *source* of political action is decisive; and this is what is meant by the rule of public opinion. Jouvenel, however, because he dislikes and distrusts public opinion yet professes to respect democracy, must somehow detach democracy from public opinion. And this he does by returning to Rousseau's notion of a real will, and of a ruler who knows, even against the judgment of a majority of his people, what the people "really" want. We are back, once again, to a disembodied, even mystical, sovereign Will. And there is no force (in Jouvenel's theory) outside this sovereign Will to tell us whether the sovereign Will has really acted in the real interests of the people, or to protect us from this sovereign Will if it has not in fact done so.

Since Jouvenel regards himself as a Christian, one can, I suppose, point to the inconvenient doctrine of sin, which would seem to suggest that no human power will always act rightly even if it always knows what is right. But a more interesting question arises when we ask Jouvenel whether he really means that the sovereign *should* act for the common good. It would appear from his teaching that the only possible answer is an affirmative one, for why should we seek a ruler who

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knows and desires the public good unless we mean him to act in its interest? Such an inference, however, would be disputed by none other than Jouvenel himself. For, while he follows Socrates in holding that justice consists in rendering to each man his due, he does not believe that the proper function of the sovereign Will is to render justice or, more grandly, to initiate policies designed to promote the common good. He holds instead that the sovereign—who in this connection he labels *rex*—should limit himself to maintaining the social framework, the rules of the game; he should uphold society's conventions; he should not himself seek to initiate right action. Such initiative should be left rather to private individuals—the *duces*. But what if the "right" initiative is not forthcoming? This, if I understand Jouvenel correctly, is of no great moment; for while the sovereign should encourage initiatives which make for change, his essential function is "to ensure the reliability of the individual's environment." He must repair the insecurities caused by initiatives. He must achieve stability in the face of change (p. 300).

LET US LOOK more closely at the argument, for what Jouvenel now seems to be affirming is (a) that the sovereign should not initiate acts to advance the common good but should content himself with preserving the existing order of things, allowing, to be sure, a modicum of change, and (b) that the sovereign in maintaining the existing equilibrium *is* in fact promoting the common good. The second of these propositions implies, I take it, an appeal to custom rather than to natural law; and this Jouvenel explicitly accepts when he argues repeatedly for the imperative of equilibrium, for the primacy of stability. "So great a blessing is moral harmony," he writes, "that whatever tends to weaken it must be dangerous and bad" (p. 123). But to argue for social cohesion without regard to the principles on which that cohesion rests, is to vindicate even authoritarian government, which Jouvenel rejects. And if not all cooperation promotes the common good, we must look once again for a standard by which we can distinguish good from bad forms of cooperation.

Jouvenel tells us that this standard is to be found not in will but in justice; but he also says that the ruler is not free to apply the conclusions of his speculative reasoning. On the contrary, he must be guided and controlled by existing conventions; he must apply the socially accepted standards. Then justice is not to be found in the individual conscience, not in "reason" as the individual or the ruler may conceive it; it is rather to be sought in the agreements of a social order. It is thus reduced to submission to convention.

But diversity and change, Jouvenel argues, must be allowed. And it is here that he builds most directly on his distinction between sovereign (or *rex*) and innovator (or *dux*). For the sovereign, as Jouvenel conceives him, "is the natural enemy of widespread initiative" (p. 301). He seeks to stabilize, not to initiate. If he were to initiate, especially if he were to claim a monopoly of the power to initiate, he would impose an authoritarianism that would destroy liberty and stifle initiative. He would seek to play God, but not being God he would rule imperfectly, and hence at times unjustly. It will not do, Jouvenel insists, to say

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that the ruler will act rationally; for in Jouvenel's view (as in Burke and in Michael Oakeshott) rationalism—i.e., the notion that planned action can produce the good—is nothing less than utopian. Not only is it impossible to judge future consequences, there is no such thing as a just social order; consequently the effort to improve society through rational thought is likely to produce the very tyranny it seeks to escape. Thus, Jouvenel concludes that the sovereign should be no more than a sort of umpire, adjudicating and adjusting the initiatives that stem from the innovators. The innovator alone must remain the driving force toward some positive goal. In this way, Jouvenel believes, the sovereign can secure both stability and change.

Now, there is a sense in which the public authority may be said to be inherently opposed to change, and this is clearly the case where that authority is the representative of a stable or traditional ruling class. But it is the mark of a democratic state—and Jouvenel professes not to oppose democracy—that classes or groups or parties are free to compete for the control of the public authority. Under such circumstances, the state may properly be regarded as the medium through which various innovators battle, so that a particular innovator may become sovereign. Then the sovereign is not the enemy but the instrument of initiative; the innovator in becoming sovereign is able to use the political apparatus not merely to preserve but to produce desired changes in the existing order of things. And since, in the modern state, significant changes are most commonly possible only, or most effectively, through state action, the dichotomy that Jouvenel postulates between innovator and sovereign breaks down. The sovereign is not someone distinct from the innovator; he is the innovator in power. What democracy does, then, from this standpoint, is to create the conditions under which the various innovators can most freely compete for the conquest of political power, to make it possible for a particular innovator or coalition of innovators to rule—to become the sovereign—and at the same time to protect the innovators out of power from being annihilated so that they in turn may someday move to the control of the public authority. And if all this is true, as I believe it is for a genuinely democratic state, then not only Jouvenel's distinction but also his prescribed policy becomes meaningless or irrelevant. For he would have the sovereign limit himself to the preservation of the existing equilibrium, and the innovator to its change; while democracy, as I understand it, assigns to the sovereign—who from this standpoint, I repeat, is the innovator in power—not merely the preservation but the promotion of the common good, as it gives to the innovator not merely an opportunity to improve the common good but an obligation to preserve the system which makes it possible for him both to survive and to seek in turn to become the sovereign. In both cases what is clearly required is the application of reason to human affairs—not only to comprehend irrational behavior but to channel, even if but in limited degree, the forces that constitute our history. If reason cannot do this much at least, it serves no useful purpose for men to reflect on the troubles of their world. They ought rather to resign themselves to the buffetings of a pointless fate.

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III

How are we to understand this book? I think we can do so only if we view it as the work of a man overcome by nostalgia. He reads the story of power as a retrogression from the rule of Christian monarchs, in which able men governed a natural community of unequals, to the rule of secular democracies, in which public opinion based on the artificial doctrine of equality governs despotically. He would restore Christian justice, but he knows too well that men in power are prone to define justice in ways counter to his own. Hence he would restrict men in power from effecting such alterations in the existing equilibrium as they might desire. Instead he would leave these initiatives to men out of power, hoping that those in power will adopt such initiatives as will permit improvement along with stability. But he provides no way of identifying and securing the adoption of the right changes, or of removing a sovereign who institutes the wrong changes, or indeed of establishing the "right" equilibrium to begin with.

What Jouvenel has written, then, is a medieval tract for medieval man, conscious of place and order and of the inspirations of a Christian god but unconscious both of his romantic image of medieval justice and of the grim experiences of our own time. What Marx and Freud and totalitarianism have taught us of the irrationality of man, of the role of economic forces in history, of mass political parties and the uses of terror—these and other things go unnoticed here. We move rather in devious ways to the ghostlike notion of a sovereign Will—a will divorced from all reality and even, in Jouvenel's terms, from all clear purpose. This, I am forced to say, is bad political theory and bad history. It is also, I fear, bad theology.

Whether conservatives will, on reflection, gain solace from this massive pastiche, I cannot say. Since conservatism is more a mood than a doctrine —since, that is to say, most conservatives do not seriously *reflect* on these things—it is probable that they will. But few students of political theory are likely to derive from this volume either a better understanding of sovereignty or a rational principle that will explain, let alone vindicate, the conservative idea.

Waking Up to the Facts Dept.

"A browser through the September, 1958, *Federal Reserve Bulletin* might be a little shocked to learn that in 1957, 8 percent of all families received total incomes of $1,000 or less and that nearly a third earned under $3,000. And, fewer than one in five managed to make as much as $7,500. All of the numbers apply to income *before* taxes. The lowest 10 percent subsisted on a mere one percent of the nation's gross income, the fortunate top tenth enjoyed 29 percent of all income produced, and the least fortunate 30 percent made do on 8 percent of the national income. J. K. Galbraith in his excellent *Affluent Society* identified the tendency of this country to grow richer and richer. But, as his own qualifications suggest, most Americans are far from being affluent. Unsimulated poverty is still the lot of many."—*The New Republic,* Oct. 13, 1958.

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TROTSKY: THE HERO AS A SYMBOL

David T. Bazelon

I would like to suggest that what most characterizes Leon Trostky, and the revolutionary generation he symbolizes, are: 1) the dominance of ideas; 2) the need and willingness to act on them; and 3) the fanatic belief in ideological purity. Any of these can be overdone and lead to distortions. Given, however, the intensity of the first two that one would expect in the life of a genius like Trotsky, together with the circumstance of isolated frustration of the revolutionary, and it seems to me that the pressure of all this on the third element would create—and in Trotsky's case, did create—a highly distorted revolutionary purism, which in turn contributed substantially to his political failures.

Since I realize that tempers are quickly touched when old political coals are raked over, let me try to avoid any unnecessary misunderstanding by stating immediately that I consider Trotsky to have been magnificent in failure; that by and large his failure was socialism's failure; that it was a political and certainly *not* a moral or literary failure; and that, in failure, he remains one of the better reasons yet offered by the twentieth century for maintaining one's integral humanity. But when all that is said, it remains true—and it is about time that we recognized it—that Trotsky was, *in his own terms,* a political failure: he lost out in the struggle to preserve the revolution in Russia, and he did not succeed in building an effective new International. His literary attack on the Third International and the monster at the head of it, carried on without the aid of peers and at the ultimate cost of his own life and the lives of most of his family, was—again in his own terms—an intellectual and moral victory only. There is a transcendant irony in the fact that Trotsky's intellectual purity, which he believed in passionately as an indispensable requirement for political *action,* should have contributed to his failure as a political activist and his success as—the phrase would have choked him—a moral symbol. If he could speak to us now I think he would in self-disgust insist on being swept into the dust-bin of History. In this, however, we will not oblige.

One more preliminary word: I beg the partisan reader to recognize that with such a man and such a subject, detailed argument is impossible in anything less than a fat book. I simply wish here to urge a proposition concerning revolutionary purism which, it seems to me, has some relevance to the intellectual reconstruction of socialism. I assume, moreover, that the reader has had some experience of the pull of ideological purism (and not necessarily in connection with Stalinism). Also, please realize that it is not part of my argument that ideas and ideas-in-ac-

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tion and clear-thinking have somehow become irrelevant or dangerous to the socialist movement.

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WHATEVER ELSE IT IS, politics is always the attempt by some people to exercise power over other people, for particular purposes or for the pure joy of it. Now let us grant the highest motives to Trotsky and the revolutionary elite of his generation; still, the issue was power over people. This elite utilized ideas as a means of control, first over themselves and then as an avenue to power over others. Their effort was to wring as much power-utility out of ideas as they could, and by sparing no one and nothing they did indeed create a new political technique. They were forced to this, most obviously, because ideas were what they had at hand, they wanted political power, and so they determined to make ideas as effective an instrument as possible in achieving power. Many important human and intellectual qualities or possibilities were lost to them as individuals through the rigor of their intellectuality, the exclusive focus of thought on action, and through the relentless devotion to ideological purity —to "right-thinking": but no sacrifice was too great for them. Under their stewardship, the mind of man had now at last been conscripted *in toto* to serve the socialist revolution. This process began slowly, with the choice of "scientific" Marxism rather than romantic anarchism; then picked up momentum in the violently symbolic world of the emigre; and finally became a "proven" article of faith with the collapse (or sell-out) of the Second International in 1914—which shattering event, they believed, was a direct result of the day-to-day disuse of ideas, the unwillingness to act on ideas, and the impurities introduced into the realm of ideas by reformism, all of which had preceded the debâcle.

So what began as a materialistic interpretation of life completed itself as one of the most original ideational penetrations of life in the history of man, a unique triumph of intellectually willed activity. It is almost as if the more these select revolutionaries repeated to themselves the tenets of the materialistic interpretation, the more fiercely they resolved to disprove them (*"Yes, yes, but not really me"*), until at last in the heart of their feelings that interpretation became the Great Lie and their willed activity became the Great Truth.

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THE FIRST CHARACTERIZING feature, the dominance of ideas in Trotsky's life, is proven once again in the recently published *Trotsky's Diary in Exile: 1935*. These brief notes begin inauspiciously with the statement: "The diary is not a literary form I am especially fond of. . . ." Trotsky then suggests that his may "take the form of a review of newspapers and periodicals." While there are many affecting and even some revealing personal references, the pages of this desultory diary do indeed consist mostly of political comment on newspaper reports; many times he merely pastes newspaper clippings, with underlinings and marginal comments, in the notebooks in which he kept the *Diary*.

Because the diary is so personal a form of expression, Trotsky's impresses us by the absence of expected elements, by revealing the extent to which his entire being had become intellectually political. He is aware of this himself, and suggests as a reason that "politics and literature constitute in essence the content of my personal

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life." When the *Diary* begins to serve its personal function, he inhibits the impulse and diverts it to politics: at one point he feels his life to be like a prison, describes it as such for a few sentences, then abruptly interrupts himself: "But all this is trivial detail compared with the realization that the fascist reaction is moving closer every day."

Ideas are all. Describing a somber landscape, he reflects: "Life is not an easy matter. . . . You cannot live through it without falling into prostration and cynicism unless you have before you a great idea which raises you above personal misery, above weakness, above all kinds of perfidy and baseness." This is an eloquent statement of the almost religious utility of ideas in his life. Ideas, indeed, must be religious in function if one is to devote "everything" to them.

To assert that the human being loses something essential, even in politics, by this deadly overemphasis on ideas and the ideological is not at all to hold a brief for mindlessness. Nor does the assertion rest exclusively on a belief in spontaneity, recognition of the heterogeneous nature of man, or the waywardness of history itself, no one of which, however, is irrelevant to political ideas and action. It is more important to point out, simply, that ideas do not save one from either life or history; *only so much can be achieved by means of them, even in the hands of a master.* The modes of ultimate devotion and fanaticism, which have achieved both magnificence and horror in history, are religious, if religion is the area of the ultimate in man; and like religion they result in effects in the world of affairs that are too inward, overly symbolic, and at last grotesque. When the idea of class allegiance, for example, can so fully dominate one that a person thought to be without it is said to have entered "individualistic nonexistence," as Trotsky says of Emma Goldman, I suggest that the stage of the grotesque has been reached.

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THE SECOND TROTSKYAN element—the need and willingness to act on ideas—also shows up in the *Diary;* but it hardly needs to be demonstrated. This was the aspect of Trotsky's personality, indeed of Marxism itself, which most appealed to intellectuals. The world was there to be changed, and only ideas-acted-on could change it. A noble, imaginative conception, which seemed to be the one idea to which all previous notions had tended (especially, it must be admitted, for young intellectuals who were just finding out how deeply troublesome it was to be such).

Trotsky was the impresario of this music of revolutionary action, the symphonic development of which occurs in his *History* as nowhere else. Even more than Lenin, he was the hero of the Bolshevik Revolution, that fabulous seizure of power which proved the efficacy of ideas—more the hero because of his superior literary ability, his intellectual arrogance, even the absence of those talents for organizational maneuvering that characterize the real politician, which Lenin certainly was and Trotsky just as certainly was not. Lenin is seen as the genuinely superior political strategist, creator and leader of the Bolshevik group; but Trotsky appears as the dramatically superior *individual* who condescended to act with and for the Bolsheviks when, because of Lenin only, they were approximately as correct as he.

Trotsky served as a hero to intellec-

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tuals because of his capacity for action, his belief in it, and the fact (or illusion: it makes no difference) that action for him proceeded from ideas. Malraux fascinates intellectuals for the same reason, even though the connection between Malraux the intellectual and Malraux the activist is frequently obscure. But labor politicians, who also are supposed to act on "ideas," do not inspire because both their ideas and their acts are mediocre. The desire of intellectuals is for symbol, not for the "best" effectiveness (especially if it is mediocre) of idea or act.

Whatever else it achieved, Trotsky's orientation toward action is undoubtedly responsible for the magnificently vibrating sense of urgency and authority in his writing. We should recognize, however, that in the end this is not a certificate of truth but rather a literary quality. Even his famous or infamous identification of himself with History as a discrete essence is a literary or (if you prefer a term closer to politics) rhetorical creation. And, again, it is not dependent on the truth for its effectiveness.

The unique thing about Trotsky is that so profoundly literary a person ever became and remained so involved in politics. One explanation is that he never really succumbed to being a politician, in the organizational sense. He was, rather, a tribune of the people: he is reputed to have been a magnificent speaker before mass audiences. His nickname, in the early emigre days, was "The Pen"; and certainly when he was not in Russia—twenty-five of his sixty years—his chief efforts were devoted to writing. Even in the midst of the struggle with Stalin he found time to write *Literature and Revolution*. In the *Diary* he says ". . . I think that the work in which I am engaged now . . . is the most important work of my life—more important than 1917, more important than the period of the Civil War or any other." The commander of the military train remained a literary man; but with the emphasis on writing *directed toward action and effect,* suffused with the dream of action.

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THE IDENTIFICATION with History, the use of the idea of history in such a personal fashion, typifies the worst uses and effects of ideational purity—which is the third, and most important and distinctive Trotskyan element. It is typical of this mode that his opponents—whether bourgeois reformers, labor leaders, socialists, Stalinists, or whosoever—are assigned for their wrong-thinking to the ash-heap of History or, depending on the venom of the moment, to their place beneath the wheels of the Juggernaut of History. Observing the bluff tactics of the Popular Front, he says: "In the good old days Victor Adler used to be a past master of such tactics, and where is his party now? . . .These gentlemen think they can cheat history. They will only cheat themselves." To which one cannot help but reply, perhaps softly, out of respect, And where is *your* party now? Purity is better than baseness by definition, but it is not necessarily more effective: and both compete in the same arena. We know now (or should) that one can purify oneself out of the possibility of political action, that perhaps Trotsky did just that with his attempted imitation of Lenin in the creation and management of the Fourth International.

What did revolutionary purism actually succeed in, viewed pragmatical-

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ly? By means of it, Lenin was able to forge a tight-knit clique which under his brilliant leadership proved competent, using the ancient technique of a minority coup, to take power in a rapidly deteriorating situation. This was and is its chief justification or "proof." Without Lenin, however, this group revealed the ravages of his tight leadership, which relied so much on purism. The power he left them was ultimately inherited by a man under whose jurisdiction right-thinking quickly became unabashed thought-control. Trotsky was aware, and asserts it in his *History*, this *Diary* and elsewhere, that the long years of training in right-thinking under Lenin did not make the Bolsheviks "right-thinkers" without Lenin (e.g., Stalin and Kamenev in April 1917 before Lenin arrived in Russia). And still he imitated Lenin in attempting to establish a system of right-thinking in the Fourth International. In this he achieved nothing, and in fact destroyed or ignored many possibilities which were his because of his commanding reputation and genius; he alienated one not-quite-right-thinker after another. An example of this was his mishandling of the opportunities presented to him by the Spanish situation, which was actually and not just potentially revolutionary. And all the previous struggle toward purity of idea was supposed to be justified because it was needed in actual revolutionary situations!

The revolutionary Marxists became disastrously doctrinaire because they believed that right-thinking was an important historical force, like the historical determinants identified by Marx, but differing happily from the latter in that one could by an act of will join up with Inevitability. In this system of revolutionary ideology, workers are never wrong, they are merely backward or misguided. It is only the intellectuals coming from petty bourgeois backgrounds—which is all of them, including Lenin and Trotsky and you and me—who are ever wrong. Workers have either come to their inevitable class-consciousness (the only form of consciousness worth a damn), or they have not yet arrived there, but inevitably will. Intellectuals are the ones who have so much to gain from right-thinking, so much to lose by a fall from grace. One becomes a right-thinker by "overcoming" one's class background, and all failures in right-thinking are explained by reference to petty bourgeois factors—the "return of the repressed," more or less. Now class background, let us remember—it used to be lost sight of—is an historical fact, not a matter of choice: it is not the same thing as class allegiance. But according to Lenin and Trotsky it is the only thing in history that, apparently, can be overcome by a pure act of will. The idea that class background, a continuing historical fact, can be transcended initially and then indefinitely by class allegiance, a continuing personal act, all accomplished by means of right-thinking, is called the "Vanguard" theory in revolutionary parlance.

A revolutionary thinker may be very correct in his analyses and still accompany the reformists, Stalinists, etc. into "the ash-can of History." But not according to Trotsky. For him, purity saves: the vanguard is the vanguard. I think Trotsky did not really comprehend what Lenin had done, which perhaps explains why he imitated him so ineptly or slavishly. For Lenin the politician, and after him Stalin the monster, used purism more

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or less consciously to create *a system of allegiance based on guilt.*

Freud thought that guilt had created the first brotherhood; but he also felt that it had been carried to unbearable lengths in the modern world. He identified the excess of guilt in the maintenance of social adhesion as basically bourgeois and Christian. After a point, guilt—even in the service of the vanguard of the proletariat—becomes self-defeating and thus an illegitimate means of control. It does not make any difference if the guilt is derived from a true crime—namely, a falling away from class allegiance, a dissolving into class background: a time comes when there is no longer any advantage at all in the increase of guilt even of a murderer, and especially not to the murderer himself. And if the point is always to be right, then we are all murderers. There will be no "socialism" worth having until we learn how to be wrong, with dignity.

Can anyone who has had a good look at the middlebrow Stalinists in America really question that their group was, to invert one of their favorite phrases, an association by guilt? All that was required for membership was a sufficiently profound hatred of American life to frighten the isolated individual, and enough involvement in that life to facilitate the transposition of that hatred and fear into guilt. And one should perhaps add, a kind of indigenous eagerness to substitute for thinking all those rituals for the alleviation of guilt which the movement provided. Stupidity was generated by the nature of the Stalinist movement where it was not given freely by the membership. That was the true donkey's end of revolutionary purism! And we are long past the time when, relying on the basically sentimental feeling that "it all could have been different," we can ignore this Stalinist caricature of revolutionary Marxism.

I do not emphasize the difference between purity by virtue of one's own thought and what might be called "delivered" purity because this is, really, only the difference between leader and led. If the genius-leader believes in purity personally, as an element of his own psychic economy, that is his concern. But when he insists that non-geniuses be pure, and defines purity for them, we are concerned with the social efficacy of purism, not the inner nature of leadership. This distinction is especially relevant to Trotsky, whose intellectual purity of character is perhaps in itself magnificent, but as an element projected by him into political action and control, I am suggesting, was disastrous. A dangerous and extreme device in any event, inducing guilt by purism is also a destructive waste of time unless you are doing so *as a means of building an organization.* Unlike Lenin, Trotsky was not politician enough to do this skillfully: his purity was personal.

Purism should be seen as an emotional, inutile factor in socialist thinking and organizational control, certainly in all but the most immediately revolutionary situations. I think this fact should be accepted as a tenet of socialist reconstruction.

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THE *Diary* affords us something of an opportunity to reflect on the present relevance of our dead hero. The end of a great tradition, he is, dead, a hero still. He was the last of the great revolutionary Marxists, and we may never see their like again. But great heroes remain vital as symbols—never more true than of Trotsky—if we can understand and forgive them for their

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errors and excesses. The hero by his very essence is a distortion; he has risen above a time and a place, a set of circumstances which put an iron limit on what one can do or be without distortion. A hero is an artist in life, his work of art is his career, and like the artist he emphasizes and selects, he distorts the material of life in favor of a fuller expression.

That is particularly the reason why we should be inspired by heroes, but never imitate them. And learn from their errors as well as their magnificence. In Trotsky's case we should learn, make indelible in our minds, the inefficacy of purism in radical politics: in a sense, he lived and died to teach this to us.

Trotsky was so great a figure that one can say that history might have been different if he had been more of a political leader and less of a pure symbol: his was a grandiose political failure. But now we must understand what happened, that he became, contrary to his own most deeply felt design, a great *moral* symbol—one of the greatest of our century. It is the fate of many heroes.

The image of Trotsky had a great influence at one time on many young radicals. Influences of this kind, enmeshing themselves in the early emotional sources of ideals, tend to persist—no less for those who have loudly negated the ideal than for those who still harbor it quietly and tenderly. The publication of the *Diary* is a good occasion to rethink the Trotsky influence, for all the old chords are sounded in it, including what may be the chief one—that *there* was a nonpareil among men.

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COMMUNICATIONS

1. Intellectuals and Russia

The following letter has been written as a reply to a review by Irving Howe of C. Wright Mills' The Causes of World War Three, *which appeared in the last* DISSENT. *A rejoinder by Howe follows.*—EDITORS.

Dear Irving:

No doubt there are others, but I have seen only three "negative" U. S. reviews of my essay, *The Causes of World War Three.* In the *Wall Street Journal,* William H. Chamberlain wrote—as expected; in the N. Y. *Post,* Arthur Schlesinger Jr. wrote—as expected; and in DISSENT, you wrote—unexpectedly. I had thought that you had abandoned the foot-dragging mood of the Cold War and were trying to make a new beginning. I had thought that an editor of DISSENT would have taken due note of differences, and then gone on to build a new left, taking into account the changed state of the world and the sorry condition of U. S. foreign policy. But no. Why waste time with lib-lab apologists and fanatical anti-Communists? But you are supposed to be in some way or another "left." So I feel the need to make a few points and to ask you a few questions.

The major questions with which your review leaves me are: Just how does your basic view of the world confrontation today differ from the line expressed by the work of Dulles-Adenauer? I suppose there are differences, but just how far do they extend? What do *you* want the United States government to do, tomorrow, next week, next year? In my essay I have tried to answer such questions, positively. Moreover, I have tried to do so in terms open to intellectuals. What, if anything, do you propose that leftward intellectuals in the USA now do? Just how do your proposals differ from those that I have offered?

I

As for your gimcrackery about causation: I think you have missed the political strategy of my essay. You don't seem to understand that to seek causes is to seek those factors that are at once strategic to the course of events and possibly open to our political will—or at least to our political demands. Nor do you see that I have always made clear for whom the programs and demands outlined are intended: they are for you and me; they are for intellectuals. (There isn't much political sense in talking to people who can't be "reached.") That is why I find so altogether curious your assertion that I understate "the significance of political ideas and ideologies." On the contrary: probably I have overstated them, both in analysis and in program. You seem to recognize this yourself, in your com-

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ments on "soft-headed liberals." Anyway: what do *you* think is the function of "ideologies" in the world confrontation today?

What you seem to want by way of a general statement of causes you indicate by stereotypes: "imperialist rivalries," "democracy vs. totalitarianism," "capitalism vs. communism," etc. My view of the state of the world is not so black-and-white. I've tried to cut beneath such tired slogans. As most literate reviewers have understood, my statement of causes rests upon the theory of history-making outlined in part one of *The Causes,* elaborated from *The Power Elite.* I don't think the strategic causes now making for World War III are to be found in some magic key; what you call my "description of the mechanics of the cold war," I think a statement of its strategic causes. If you believe it is not, then: What do *you* think are the major causes?

II

In your comments about the parallel developments of the U. S. and the USSR, you ask: Why, then, haven't they become "harmonious partners"? First answer: What a curious expectation! The parallel developments of western industrial nations have not seemed to make them "harmonious partners." Second answer: Wait a while; it is not inconceivable that they will. In the meantime, I do not "assimilate" the U. S. and the USSR "into one category." One writes in a context in which the two are regularly presented as polar opposites, one good, the other evil. Therefore: I state differences, but I stress parallels. From these, by the way, I do not draw optimistic conclusions. But what do *you* think are the most significant differences and parallels?

What disturbs you most is my attitude towards the Soviet Bloc and the balance of blame I try to draw between Russian and American policies and practices. We differ, I suppose, in two evaluations: You do not take as seriously as I do the new beginnings in the Soviet Bloc since the death of Stalin. You no longer take as seriously as I do the lack of new beginnings and the disuse of formal freedom in the USA since World War Two. Probably these are the real issues between us. I suspect that you take a more or less standard view. I don't. The truth is I've not yet worked out an assessment that really satisfies me; I am very much at work on it these days. I wish you'd try to break out of the weary old beliefs you seem to hold about it and help me, and others, formulate a fresh view. I am not dogmatic about it: persuade me.

In the meantime, I am coming to believe that the Soviet Bloc is changing very fast indeed, that some of these changes are "liberalizing" in a firm sense of the word, that there are signs that these are going to continue, and that what *we* do will affect their chances to be more fully realized.

In *The Causes*—as well as elsewhere (see the BBC's *Listener,* 12 March, 16 March, 2 April 1959)—I have drawn many parallels between the USA and the USSR. I have also noted that I do not "wish to minimize the important differences between the establishment of culture, and of cultural workmen, in the Soviet Union and in the United States. I wish neither to excuse the brutal facts of Soviet cultural tyranny, nor to celebrate the formal freedom

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of cultural workmen in the West. Surely there is enough such celebration of self and denunciation of enemy.

"The formal freedom of the West rests upon cultural traditions of great force; it is very real—this freedom; it has been and it is immensely valuable. But must we not now ask to what extent the continuation of this freedom today is due to the fact that it is *not* being exercised? And that it has little or no effect of public consequence? Certainly in America today there is much more celebration and 'defense' of civil liberties than insurgent and effective use of them."

But how about *you?* Do you believe that the Soviet Bloc and the Soviet Union itself is a monolithic and unchanging piece of evil? If not, what are the five or six most significant changes in the Soviet Union since the death of Stalin? What are the most hopeful? The most depressing?

III

You do seem to feel that the Soviet Union is absolutely evil; "morally" you do not want to co-exist with it. But you take the curiously expedient view that amoral co-existence is OK, necessary, etc. I do not believe the Soviet system is absolutely evil. In my own reflection I certainly do not make the curiously expedient distinction which you suggest between moral and political co-existence, I am for co-existing, period. Given the means of violence and the facts of their distribution, this is only to say that I am for living and against dying. Also I am against subordinating morality to "politics" or political policy to "military strategy."

I do not believe the Soviet Bloc is a total lie, and the American alliance a half-truth. Both are full of lies; both are full of truths; the cold war they wage—the *New Statesman* has recently observed—is primarily "a conflict of hypocrisies." Do you deny that? *The Causes* is not an attempt to draw up an overall balance of blame. Nor is it a full-scale book of ideals. It is about war and the arms race. In both of these systems the one big lie that concerns me in this book is the military: the lie that war is still a means of any conceivably human policy. On this point, the balance of blame is very difficult to draw up. This difficulty, I suspect from your review, you are too ready to ignore by old slogans rooted in old political emotions; my concern is that we confront it carefully with full awareness of the meaning of World War III. Recently you have written of a collapse of "cold war moods"; in your review, however, you do not display much of this "collapse." You write like the cold warriors.

To dissent is lovely. But Irving, as regards foreign policy, from what, tell me, do you dissent? I think probably what you may need—if you'll forgive my saying so—is a big dose of new fact. Don't you alternate between intake and output? I do. Just now—in fact for about two years now—I've been organizing materials-of-fact about each of the world's regions. I find it all quite different than it was when you probably last looked at it closely—which I suppose to have been sometime in the forties. Could it be that you have set your mind in terms of what-was-what some time ago? What have you recently read—apart from rumors filed from Hong Kong—about China? Why not give yourself a big dose of new fact? By the way, don't you think

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Stuart Hughes' review of my essay in *Commentary* (Feb. 1959 issue) ever so much more politically intelligent than your weary hesitations?

You say nothing that intellectually or politically breaks through what you acknowledge to be the "sterility" of cold war ideology. So far as program goes, all you say is: Matters are very complex; let us not be careless; there are great risks. Indeed there are: The greatest is World War III. Why don't you take the risk of nuclear war seriously enough to pick up from this essay what you agree with and go on from there to set forth alternative programs for the USA, and for intellectuals of the "democratic left"? It would be a welcome relief from the general "sterility"—the boredom and the "balance"—of DISSENT's recent pages having to do with the world scene. Why do you not really take stock of where you stand, and try to make a new beginning? Until you do, I'll stick to the assessments and proposals I've outlined in my essay and continue to elaborate them with the help of those who have not vet joined The Old Futilitarians of the dead American left.

Yours truly,

C. WRIGHT MILLS

Irving Howe replies:

Let me confess that I have small appetite for answering Mills' "letter." I enjoy open and forthright polemics, and don't mind being roughed up a little: one must expect to take as well as give. But I find profoundly distasteful—it offends my view of polemic as an art form—a Pecksniffian strategy that can begin with "dear Irving" and end with a death notice. Nothing is more characteristic of mass culture in America than maintaining a surface of "friendliness" in order to leak out a dribble of innuendo. (As Dwight Macdonald remarked in a recent DISSENT: " 'Brother is used by Americans to express hostility and contempt.")

Yes, the essential disagreement concerns the Communist dictatorships. That there have been important changes, some due to an inner stabilization of totalitarian society, others to a desire by the rulers to lead more relaxed lives, still others to fear of pressures from long-suffering peoples (to mention only a few possible causes)—all this is quite familiar and has been discussed frequently in DISSENT. That some of these changes have resulted in an easing of the immediate living conditions of the people subjected to Communist regimes, is also familiar to everyone. The crucial fact remains, however, that the Communist states are still monolithic one-party dictatorships which deprive their people of the most elementary rights; and that anyone, especially an intellectual, who values freedom must continue to be a principled moral-political opponent of these regimes. Does Mills agree with this or not? This is the heart of the matter, and he cannot evade it by airy references to "tired slogans" or to his dislike of "black and white" formulas.

When Mills quotes himself as not wishing "to excuse the brutal facts of Soviet cultural tyranny," I recognize the man I have known through many years of intellectual and personal association: the man, if I may say so, who learned something, though perhaps not enough, from "the Old Futilitarians

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of the dead American left." But when Mills writes in his book as he does about Hungary, when he systematically does minimize the differences between totalitarian and democratic societies (differences that extend far beyond the bounds of "culture"), and when in his "letter" he writes about Soviet society in terms that I find distressing and shall note in a moment—then it is a new Mills. There is obviously an inner conflict here, and one can only hope for a fruitful resolution.

Is "the Soviet Bloc and the Soviet Union itself . . . a monolithic and unchanging piece of evil?" Words like good and evil may not be the most satisfactory categories for analyzing political phenomena; but never mind. The answer is: No, the kinds and forms of totalitarian Communism have changed. But more: there are many signs of good in the Communist countries. The Hungarian revolutionists who proclaimed the idea of a free socialist society and now rot in jail under the "liberalizing" dispensation, are good. The Polish "revisionists," largely silenced by Gomulka, are good. Milovan Djilas is good. So too is Boris Pasternak. And so too are the Chinese "right deviationist" intellectuals. Everything in the totalitarian world which helps to crumble the party's monopoly of power and thereby disintegrate the rule of the regime, is good. But the regime itself is evil. And only by ceaselessly attacking it—in *our* ways, the ways of democrats and socialists—can we give some little aid to our comrades, known and unknown, in the east. This means for example that if one were to visit Poland today one would instinctively solidarize oneself with the defeated and harassed "revisionists"—the dissenters of the east—rather than with, say, a "cultural spokesman" for Gomulka.

Is it, in any case, to beliefs like these that Mills refers when he speaks of "old slogans rooted in old political emotions?" How old is old, anyway? Let us assume, just for the moment, that my main "political emotion" in regard to the Russian regime is the consequence of its bloody suppression of the Hungarian revolution. That happened only two and a half years ago! Now Americans have a notorious incapacity for remembering, but are the lessons of Hungary and the intense responses they aroused to be dismissed as "old political emotions"? An intellectual should have a memory lasting a bit longer than two and a half years; he should remember the purges and the slave camps and the terror, not merely out of piety toward their victims, though that too, but because the kind of society that made these possible still flourishes. I, for one, choose to remember: *everything*. Does that make me "an Old Futilitarian of the Dead American left"? So be it. Better an "old Futilitarian of the dead American left" than a surf-rider on the Wave of the Future.

WAR IS UNTHINKABLE. The Western powers, tied to the interests and outlooks of capitalism, have usually shown themselves unable to cope politically with the Communist thrust. This is the dilemma and tragedy of our moment (which cannot even be apprehended, let alone met, through the neat list of 18 points which Mills drew up in his book and of which, like a middle-aged man come late to pleasurable vices, he is so proud). Because that is the dilemma and tragedy of our moment, we must accept the co-

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existence of the two power blocs. That means, to quote a few words from my review of Mills' book, "that negotiations are necessary, and where there are negotiations there may have to be concessions. But what troubles me is a sentiment one finds these days which urges not merely this political coexistence but also a kind of 'moral coexistence,' by which I mean an accommodation not merely with Russia as a power *but with Communist dictatorship as a form of society. . . .*"

Mills wishes to know whether my objection to "moral coexistence" implies a preference for amoral coexistence: a question that shows he hasn't begun to function seriously as a political man. My objection implies, first of all, as I wrote in my review, the realization that "there can be no secure peace or genuine relaxation as long as totalitarianism flourishes" (does Mills disagree?) and second, that, no matter what arrangements are or have to be made by the power blocs, the intellectuals, though not they alone, must continue their fundamental opposition to and criticism of Communist totalitarianism. There may be no choice but to put up with (that's what coexist means) societies that systematically suppress freedom; but let us not learn to find virtues in their vices. It *may* be necessary for the U. S. government to recognize the Pankow regime; but let us not, as independent intellectuals, behave like American businessmen when they are introduced to Mikoyan or American tourists on a guided journey. Our supreme task is to continue to speak and fight for freedom: which means, among other things, to oppose the Communist dictatorships. That, in a word, is what I urge in my opposition to "moral coexistence."

Mills, however, seems impatient with these qualifications. He wants "coexistence, period." The innocence that a sophisticated man can force himself into! Can he not see that the whole agonizing political problem is how to "coexist with commas, semi-colons and dashes," that is, how to shape the terms of coexistence, which can vary from catastrophic rigidity to catastrophic appeasement. Simply to cry "coexistence, period" is to abandon the right to political judgment.

In any case, what does all of it—the "coexistence, period," the "program," the "18 points"—come to in practice? Here we are before a crucial problem: Berlin. In my review I asked Mills what his program and his points signify in regard to Berlin; but he has not troubled to answer this question. At one point in his book he advocates that the government "abandon all military bases and installations outside the continental domain of the United States." Is he then prepared to urge a unilateral withdrawal from Berlin, leaving its two million people to the mercies of the "liberalizing" Khrushchev? If he says "no," then his program is not to be taken seriously; if he says "yes," then it is all too serious.

As FOR HIS rhetorical compost—the American executive, a Cyrus Eaton of the intellectuals, who in an expansive belly-patting mood lets us in on his Methods of Work (and the big revelation?—that he alternates between "intake and output"—which, if you translate it into English, means between reading and writing); the disingenuous questions, really "questions," advanced with a sort of TV abundance (is he really so incapable of intel-

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lectual distinctions as to be unable to tell the difference between me and "Dulles-Adenauer"?); the patronizing *chutzpah* with which he asks whether I don't agree that Stuart Hughes is politically more intelligent than I am (let me inform Mills that Hughes and I, as good friends, have discussed this problem at some length and have come to a definitive answer); and his new role of the one-man political sect, beguiled at having his "program," though ready, in his largeness of spirit, to allow one to make modifications in it —all this I find tedious.

Sometimes, however, a phrase will reveal a spirit. "What," asks Mills, "have you recently read—apart from rumors filed from Hong Kong—about China?" Anyone with political sensitiveness will have no trouble in recognizing the nature, the bent, the tone of that question. Well, let me say that I've read a good deal about the recent "liberalizing" of Tibet. And I've read the richly detailed report in DISSENT (Autumn 1958) based on official Communist sources, which shows how Chinese intellectuals were beaten down after the 100 Flowers. But this apart, I am struck by the echoes that Mills' question raises. For the last time I heard something like *that* it was 20 years ago, when certain intellectuals were denouncing "slander factories" in Riga. It seems these "factories" were spreading rumors that there was slave labor in Russia.

2. The Dynamics of Minority Hatred

Arthur Steig

Each of the many minority hatreds which exist in our world (antiSemitism, antiNegroism, for example) appears to have an individual existence and unique character. But, while each indeed has a distinct social history and wears its own peculiar face, they all derive their energy from the same source.

It is the purpose of this paper to demonstrate that all minority hatreds, despite gross or subtle differences in their folklore and modes of expression, are created and kept in motion by one central neurotic dynamic.

Minority hatreds are woven in a complex way into complex social fabrics. Many useful investigations have been made of these complexities. My analysis, I believe, provides a spine for the bones they have unearthed.

Men and women carry beneath the burden of their impotence a spark of life, however buried, that flares at the sight of the Stranger. And in this blind light they see his strangeness as the mark of a terrifying freedom.

ALL HATREDS of minorities are produced by the same psychological dynamic. In all cases the energy involved is, *to begin with,* a healthy energy. It is the irrepressible energy that beats against the wall of our Judaeo-Christian

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antisexual ethos. (All those who have overmended Freud are asked to remember the sexual anguish, of, at least, their teen-age years.)

Minority hatred is produced by a corruption of primary, creative, biological energy. This process of corruption has two phases, which develop over a period of many years and which are related to the growth of the typical neurotic personality structures of our society. In the first phase, the primary energy is blocked and largely transformed into an energy of rebellion. In this phase the energy is still a healthy energy. It is not flowing freely in its natural channel, but it is moving in its natural direction, and it is fighting for its freedom. In fighting for freedom, it encounters the same forces that thwarted it to begin with—the forces of the culture-authority, now firmly established in the psyche. The conflict produces intense anxiety.

The second phase is a brilliant neurotic maneuver: At one stroke the energy of rebellion is transformed into an energy of self-repression: By attacking the most available symbol of nonconformism—the minority group —one reaffirms one's submission to the culture-authority.

IN THE UNIVERSAL, swampy Unconscious the minority group always stand for *those who f--- better than I do.* The only Negro in real danger of being lynched is one who gives circumstantial support to this anxiety. All psychoanalysts find that their white Christian patients feel that Negro and Jew enjoy special sexual license—and that Jews (for whom, after all, the gentiles constitute a "minority" group) feel that the *goy* is a sexual libertine. The Negro does not reciprocate this unwarranted compliment to the white *gentile* because he submits to *their* culture-authority: The Whites, as Whites, cannot therefore constitute a minority for him in the sense that the gentile does for the Jew. But the Negro can, and does, participate—as a gentile—in anti-Semitism. (Negro hatred of Whites, in general, has a *rational* basis—just as does that part of the Jew's antigentilism which stems from memory of long persecution.)

All minority hatred then is, in Freudian terms, Id transformed into an ally of the Superego. Minority hatred, in helping the common man submit to a state of quasi-castration, also makes him a more reliable citizen economically and politically.

Why do minority hatreds proliferate their rich folklore? Is it, of course, because who he f---'s better than I do is he who f---'s *dirtier.* The conclusion naturally follows that he is therefore generally no-good (indolent or over-ambitious, brutish or overintelligent, a usurer or Communist). This latter part of the neurotic dynamic is the only part that enters the conscious mind. Here it is elaborated into the endless rationalizations and justifications that the hater has at his lips. Whatever guilt-feelings appear simply instigate (defensively) more vicious irrationalities.

GIVEN A REPRESSIVE culture, and a minority group large enough to be significant, minority hatred will necessarily develop. If Freud's theory that sexual repression is the basis of culture were correct (a theory contradicted by many anthropological findings—Malinowski's for example—and questioned by one's innate sense of decency), then minority hatred would

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exist until we had a civilization so repressive that minorities were obliterated. This solution to the problem was almost arrived at by the Catholic Inquisition and, more recently, by Hitler. Soviet Russia is taking small steps in the same direction—falteringly, impeded by the Marxgeist.

Achieving the end of minority hatred and minority persecution is no less difficult than achieving a new society. It is the same task. In the meantime, only remedies can be sought. Combating the verbalized rationalizations of minority hatred (the top of the iceberg) is virtually useless. The hope that education will wash away minority hatred is even more Utopian than the idea that we can achieve a good world through universal psychotherapy. In the meantime we can hope that the very gradual (though, historically speaking, rapid) growth of sexual freedom will decrease the energies available to minority hatred. The only active measure that can be taken against this social disease is to repress its overt expressions through force of law. Because minority hatred is rooted in social submission, *social authority* (as ethos and as punitive force) is the only means for holding it in rein.

To sum up: Minority hatred engages and dissipates the energies of rebellion in a complex and corrupt act of submission. It is only one of many dunghills onto which man's everflowing creative energies are deposited by the neuroses which a repressive society creates—and from which the society derives its continuity.

Some notes on Particulars

The contempt of a minority group for itself—the ultimate in social conformism—is a bizarre example of the many ways in which minority hatred corrupts its victims as well as its practitioners.

PSYCHOLOGISTS who delight in interpreting political radicalism as sexual sublimation are guilty of a gross irrationality: All sound philosophies of dissent have at least an intuitive awareness of the connection between social repression and sexual repression. When social dissent fails to see this connection, it is invariably sublimation, and, like Nazism, wholly corrupt. The captains and carriers of repression, whether they be Calvinists or Communists, have an *unfailing* fear and hatred of the peaceful promethean forces of clean (animal) sexuality.

THE BELIEF that freedom from antiSemitism (for example) is a product of humane intelligence is true only loosely and at second hand: It is true only insofar as intelligence tends to produce *genuine* social dissent. (The genuineness of dissent cannot be measured by degrees of overt "leftness.") The degree of an individual's antisemitism is in direct proportion to the degree of his attachment to repressive authority: A Jew imprisoned at Buchenwald (a camp that held many "Red" political prisoners, and criminals, as well as Jews) reported that "The least antiSemitic element among the prisoners seemed to be the common criminals." The criminal, having established in practice his freedom from the state-authority, has little use for the psychological dynamic of antiSemitism—less use, it would appear, than the "revolutionary."

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POLITICAL ANTISEMITISM (as in Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union) is sometimes believed to be propaganda contrived for special ends. But the image of a group of Machiavellian politicos "putting over" anti-Semitism on a naive people is totally inaccurate. The politicos are, rather, the antiSemitic archetypes of an antiSemitic people. Goering, in private conversation, referred to the Jews as "black ravens"—and, in the matter of confiscating their belongings, said "they stole them anyhow." And it is safe to assume that Stalin in his antiSemitic persecutions satisfied *himself* even more than political expediency.

THE ACADEMIC Marxist will find it difficult to accept a theory of minority hatred that is not based on production relations. He will have to satisfy his compulsion to understand everything in economic terms by reading or writing treatises that ravel and unravel the fringes of the problem. A study, for example, of the economic competition between Southern Negroes and lumpen Whites cannot obscure the fact that the poor White's hatred of the Negro and the bourgeois White's hatred of the Negro have the same root.

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BOOKS

Essays by Rosenberg

THE TRADITION OF THE NEW, by Harold Rosenberg. Horizon, 1959. 285 pp. $4.95.

By a quietly satisfactory law of nature, the brightest people write the best books, if you can get a book out of them. Now a publisher has had the good sense to get Harold Rosenberg to collect and arrange a plentiful volume of his essays; the best such book from an American in a long time, so bear with me while I praise it. The arrangement is excellent. In reading one essay, you come to question some basic idea of the author, and then in the next essay, which seems to be on a different theme, your question is answered. What Harold says is always the play of his mind on a particular subject; but he has a dialectical and integrating mind. In this review, let me try to trace the plot of this wide-ranging collection.

Some of these essays are the kind of phony book-reviews that use a book as a springboard for the "reviewer's" own ideas. Usually this genre is outrageous; it tells nothing to the author of the book and fails to perform the noble task of introducing a new work to its public. Harold employs it, however, as a necessity for his intellectual being; for his thinking is *both* historical and existential. He does not easily, like a poet, find his present by making it up as if out of nowhere and never, but he engages himself with the intellectual events that are actually trending, important modern books and movements of art. And in this engagement, his effort is not, finally, to be their notator and historian, but to fight toward his own identity, to find who he is in that which is. He fights gallantly and with a profusion of invention, but what is most admirable is how he fights honorably and never accepts "convenient" allies. Put intellectually, his problem is to distinguish between achieving authentic identity and assuming or being assigned a role; where by identity I do not mean, of course, individuality, but one's own meaning *in* the scheme of things—find your meaning and you will know the scheme. My hunch is that Harold fancies himself a little as Father Jacob wrestling and dawning toward his true name Israel, but it's still pretty dark. Put practically, in America 1930-1959, his problem has been to remain within fighting and dialogue range of the other writers without belonging to this "intellectual" swim or that "position-taking" magazine; luckily he has an assertive and sociable disposition, a kind of ram in ram's clothing.

He is a lousy critic, for he does not concentrate his intelligence on the object before him. In this long book which could be superficially called a volume of critical essays, there is hardly a single art-work or poem made vivid for us, its structure laid bare, its beauty underlined, its flaw explained. (Without any doubt Harold loves these modern art-works and poems, but he applies his analysis elsewhere.) The result is that here the essays most directly on art, those on the New York school painting, which have won him most notice, are quite poverty-stricken. He himself understands this; he begins his celebrated essay on the Action Painters with the sentence: "What makes any definition of a movement in art dubious is that it never fits the deepest artists in the movement—certainly not as well as, if successful, it does the others." Precisely. Then why does he give his subtile thought so

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fully to the second-best? The answer is grand, sad, and comic. He is writing their manifestoes, *noblesse oblige*. It is an act of Naming, that helps a thing to become itself. Like other painters, our New Yorkers are either fantastic blabbers or wise owls with corresponding bird brains; but, like all not greatly inspired folk who are honestly taking a risk, they need to have something to tell themselves and answer their critics, so Harold makes up their sense for them. He does not praise or explain the paintings, but he gives them a warrant to exist; and of course we have had the usual rich comedy of the painters disowning their namer at the same time as they hew to his line.

VERY DIFFERENT is the force of the essays that deal with Identity and Role directly, the essays on Mann's *Joseph*, on character contrasted with personality, on the masque of Rome in the French Revolution, on the portrait of the Communist Hero (though this last is flashy and little better than Koestler or Orwell.) Here we leave the short paragraphs of polemical manifestoes and the glancing references to poets, and we begin to enjoy the long-breathed rhythm of philosophical security that can take everything relevant into account and that, having the whole culture to choose from, chooses illustrations that are apt and great. The author explores what it is to have or achieve identity as a character in a drama, as a culprit before the law, as an actor in a theodicy or an agent of historical forces. The one who can bridge the gap between the idea and the act, this is the hero. We are told, but too briefly, the drastic conditions under which a man finds his identity. (Might I suggest two other profitable areas for this same discussion: the Hobbesian positive law as distinguished from the older natural law, and Rank's will-therapy as distinguished from Freud and Reich.)

Some of what Rosenberg says is novel —just about the right amount to make the discussion important, for novelty is not an unmixed virtue in first philosophy; but all of it is original, springs from himself, and this is a precious virtue indeed. The theme of authentic identity and role is a great one; in our times it is in the air and forces itself on the writers; but this writer alone keeps it centrally in focus and does not treat it as an incident. Let me say merely that recent sociologists who use role-playing as their fundamental concept would greatly benefit by studying their concept treated here with philosophical scope, literary knowledge, political sophistication, and present concern for how to live as a man. They might perhaps learn that what they take to be the essence of social man is a clownish trait of the rag-ends and bob-tails of men. I like, too, that our author does not let us forget that we have inherited the failure of many a revolution and it is not so easy these days to make sense or retain one's honor; one has to rely on one's common sense and native honor, nor is that encouraged.

Not that, in the end (wherever that is), I agree with Harold Rosenberg. My bother is that he does not press on to new glaring issues that arise. Consider the following brilliant paragraph:

> That the purpose of the law in executing a criminal is to avenge itself upon him or to deter others has long been denied by philosophers of the law. The logic of the execution becomes clear when we understand it as an attempt to eliminate the criminal identity and thus to cancel the crime itself which that identity personifies. The death of the criminal is incidental to this aim of cleansing the past. Any other means equally certain of accomplishing the dissolution of the criminal identity would be, theoretically, as satisfactory.

This is remarkable. But must we not then go on to ask: *Whence* is this sense of tribal sin that must be exorcized? who is feared and what is feared? is there not perhaps some connection between this and the *problem* of identity? Or, in another passage, Harold well shows how it is the threat of death that brings a convert or a Hamlet to the sense of his identity; but he then does not go on to analyze why just that cause has, for just that type, that peculiar effect, since other people face death otherwise. Such analysis would, I propose, lead him into realms of psychology where he seems to be unwilling to venture,—fearing for his identity?

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Let me say my bother another way: this author tends to think always of the Hero, who has a "will for the new." He does not dwell much on the idea of the Sage, invisible, flexible as water, and who brings things to pass without "acting" at all.

BUT LASTLY, let me turn to the Harold Rosenberg that some of us admire the most, who speaks in the final group of these essays, "The Herd of Independent Minds." Here he has no problem of identity for he is secure in his minimum identity as an honest rational gentleman. I say it with dismay, that Harold is one of the few who, in crises of wars, McCarthys, anti-McCarthys, sputniks, or Pasternaks, can be relied on not to betray common reason and manliness. Sometimes roaring with fun:

> In those days, Eliot's wit was a knife that cut both ways . . . Eliot's pose, like his poetry, contained a good dose of dada. Later literary men who copied Eliot's representative-of-culture act missed its two edges and thought the point was to be dull. When I first encountered the gravity of Lionel Trilling, I did not get the joke; it took some time to realize that there wasn't any.

Sometimes indignant, and then his voice has a slow impatience and somber sarcasm, reeking with lofty disgust:

> These scoundrels were, as a type, middle-class careerists, closed both to argument and evidence, impatient with thought, psychopaths of "radical" conformity. The "idealism" of this sodden group of Philistines, distinguished from the rest of their species by their more up-to-date smugness and systematic malice, can be respected only by those who ignore its function in hiding from them the cynicism which hardened their minds against any human plea or any evidence embarrassing to the Party. Delirious at finding themselves on The Stage of History, they eagerly carried out the intellectual atrocities assigned to them, while keeping one eye on a post in the future International Power, the other on the present good spot in the government, the university, Hollywood, or publishing.

I cannot conceive of more rhetorical force, without the use of a single exaggeration or a detail that is not concrete and obvious. So he slugs at the brutality of the fellow-traveling Liberals, or the slanderous foolishness of Leslie Fiedler, the pomposity of Danny Bell, or the supine melancholy of W. H. Whyte. But alas, Harold! you can say the plain truth in a good strong voice, but who is to grab them by the scruff of the neck and make them answer or shut up?

The plot of this book is then as follows: in the beginning, the author generously gives identity to the others; in the middle he ably discusses the problem of identity; in the end he speaks strongly from his own identity.

PAUL GOODMAN

Spanish Harlem

ISLAND IN THE CITY, by Dan Wakefield. Houghton Mifflin, 278 pp. $4.00

Dan Wakefield has written a fine human document about the 600,000 Puerto Ricans in New York City. It is a little on the sentimental side (perhaps in reaction to those who have seen these people as so many faceless ciphers); but never mind. Considering the widespread prejudice and open hostility which these people have suffered from since they began to arrive in 1945, Wakefield can easily be forgiven a tendency to overplay his hand; the reader's common sense will redress the balance. And if there are any doubts on the need for elementary humane emotions, consider the strike of the employees in the so-called New York

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City charity hospitals. The wealthy philanthropic benefactors, donating their administrative and charitable services, took an attitude toward their Puerto Rican employees (now the bulk of the non-professional hospital workers) which has a long history. In fact, it dates back to the day 500 years ago when Columbus enslaved the first Indian to carry water to his ships and commanded his chief to lead him to gold.

That Dan Wakefield's approach to this latest minority problem (he'll probably object to that term, and rightly so) is different from the growing collection of dreary documentary "studies" is made clear at the start. The author conjures up the nightmare that we call Spanish Harlem; then he leads us into it via the migrant night flight from San Juan. The hopes, sufferings and dilemmas of its people are seen not through the city's official institutions (Welfare Department, Housing Commission, police), but rather through institutions of the Puerto Ricans themselves: local clubs, churches, political groups, teen-age gangs, etc. Wakefield attempts to penetrate still deeper into the mind and feeling of these people by forcing us to see their culture at work: spiritualism and the shadowy semi-voodoo world; the addicts and semi-criminals; the Puerto Rican in the strange world of labor organization; the naive expression of independent political action. Occassionally, but then simply to underscore a point, he quotes from one of the official documents.

Now, this world of Spanish Harlem is something quite distant from the best of us. It is not easy to "get it" and there are certainly more who would argue that the candle is hardly worth the game than those who feel drawn to penetrate its mysteries. Dan Wakefield has given of himself—probably too much of himself—in his effort. This leads to certain weaknesses in his book which ought not to be concealed. Because, after all, there are a number of important problems about these people which *do* present difficulties.

Perhaps the major one is this: The interaction between Puerto Rican culture with that of post-war America is different from all previous relationships between immigrant groups and the host culture of the U.S. Is it because this is the first instance of a pre-industrial minority group having to enter our "mass society?" That is one possible explanation of why the "Americanization" of the Puerto Rican proceeds, apparently, on the lowest possible level. Unfortunately, Dan Wakefield does not discuss this fundamental issue.

Let me illustrate with an example. Education, we know, has been both a stepping stone and a touchstone (as to attitudes) for all minority groups in the past. Wakefield, recognizing this, devotes a chapter to the matter, but it is the most conventional one in his book. It seems to me that he should have faced the challenging question of educational attitudes among the Puerto Ricans, of motivation (or its absence), if he wanted to make this chapter as meaningful as many of his others. For the fact is, and much teacher experience substantiates this, the children of this people are under-motivated or little interested in education either for itself or for social advancement, and in this respect are notably different from almost all other immigrant groups. I do not claim to know the reason for this; yet it ought to be faced candidly.

It is possible that Dan Wakefield believes these people have most to offer, along other lines—the warmth of family relationships and solidarity; a natural good humor and feeling; the ease of their children and the femininity of their women. If this is so, then he is right and the other issues I have raised fall into a subordinate place in this troubled America with its jittery people.

STANLEY PLASTRICK

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Miscellany

The Missing Masterpiece

Norman Thomas di Giovanni

THE LATE Alvan T. Fuller, businessman and twice Governor of Massachusetts, collected paintings. It is told that in his lifetime Fuller was a very generous man. Earlier this year some fifty of his best pictures hung in a memorial exhibit in Boston's Museum of Fine Arts.

The museum visitor may have read this about Fuller in the exhibit's catalog:

> It is rarely given to one man in a lifetime . . . to pursue three careers and to make each of them so large and lasting a contribution to his community . . . In all three [Fuller] won distinction: in business, in politics and, not least, in collecting art . . . His presence in Congress for four years and his two terms as Governor of Massachusetts from 1925 to 1929 exemplified public stewardship of a high order, marked as they were by his forcefulness and independence . . .

But on to the collection. There was one Rembrandt, a Gainsborough, a Reynolds, a luminous Turner and several Romneys. In another room were five Renoirs, small and second-rate, a Pissarro, a Monet, a Degas. Best were some Sargent exercises: "copies" after Dutch masters. The one original Sargent was a murky oil; the one Augustus John, plainly bad. Also hanging were two stiff Canalettos and four large, coarsely executed Hubert Robert pastorals. And that was about it.

Did this collection reflect money without taste? Perhaps. Anyway it was disappointing—especially after the fine catalog and the tasteful modern posters pasted in every subway station. Somehow, though, the disappointment was to be expected, and here is why.

Sadly, flagrantly missing from among the collection was any indication of Alvan T. Fuller's greatest masterpiece, his own true handiwork: the execution in 1927 of the two Italian anarchists, Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti. Their faces—Sacco's long-nosed, smooth-skinned and young; Vanzetti's haggard, hook-nosed, with the bushy mustache; both of them hollow from their prison hunger strikes—these faces were missing, were what killed the truth and quality of the Fuller exhibit. But of course it was to be guessed beforehand that this masterpiece would not be represented there.

And there were some in Boston who had surmised it, for at ten o'clock on the morning the Fuller exhibit was officially opened, three men and a woman stood at the front entrance to the museum distributing leaflets. On one side of the leaflet was printed—startling white against a black background—the death masks of the two anarchists. REMEMBER! the leaflet read, MURDERED AUG. 23, 1927. Above that, "Sacco and Vanzetti belong here"; and at the bottom, "Be sure to include this picture among the masterpieces of Alvan Tufts Fuller, now on exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts." On the reverse side was the celebrated statement of Vanzetti's that begins, *"If it had not been for this thing I might have lived out my life talking at street corners to scorning men."*

THE PERSPICACITY, the downright clairvoyance of those four who distributed the leaflets: they had guessed correctly that the masterpiece would be missing. By the front door of the museum, they stood in the gray cold until shooed off the property by museum guards, who threatened arrest. But they took their places at the edge of the street, where they were interviewed by newspapermen, tape-recorded for radio broadcast and filmed for TV. They had with them the original Sacco and Vanzetti death masks, cast in stark white plaster. One of them, Aldino Felicani, a Boston printer, anarchist and close friend of the two men, said to the papers, "We have been told this is in poor taste, since the exhibition honors Governor Fuller, who is dead. But," Felicani pointed out, holding up the death masks of his two friends, "we respectfully say that these two persons are also dead and they were murdered."

The Boston *Globe* carried the story in two columns on its front page: "Art Museum Police Rout Sacco-Vanzetti Pickets." The sympathetic account began,

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"The ghosts of 'a good shoemaker and a poor fish peddler'—anarchists Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, executed for murder in 1927—came back as they often do, to haunt Boston today." So after more than thirty-two years—a generation—Sacco and Vanzetti are still front-page news in the city that put them to death. The United Press sent the story through New England towns. The next day there were some two dozen lines on the art page of the New York *Times* with the story of the protest.

The four picketers stood with their leaflets, their vision and their sense of justice to tell some who did not know and to remind others who had forgotten that Alvan T. Fuller's life was not quite the "useful and creative one" described in the museum catalog. Their presence with the missing masterpiece in hand told a great deal about that public career of Fuller's, "marked . . . by his forcefulness and independence . . ."

When Fuller died in a moving picture theatre a year ago, the papers carried the news in full headlines. But the bold subheadlines said nothing of Fuller's business, nothing of his collection of paintings. The subheads in both the *Globe* and *Herald* talked of Sacco and Vanzetti. What was Sacco's and Vanzetti's career was also Fuller's career. But what was the anarchists' triumph—in Vanzetti's words, their "work for tolerance, for Justice, for man's understanding of man" —was the Governor's nemesis. His name will live only as the names of Sacco and Vanzetti live.

They Laugh That Win

J. L. McPherson

Professor Alex Inkeles told a group at the University of Michigan that the more often you laugh the higher you are likely to be on the social scale.

"Contrary to popular belief," he said in a lecture, "the lower you are in social status the less likely you are to report having laughed during the past day."

The Harvard Professor said his rule held true in warm countries such as Italy as well as cold countries such as Britain. —*New York Times,* December 6, 1958.

INKELES'S RULE, or the law of non-Gravity, will surely give way, once the qualifiers, revisionists and neo-Inklings have begun their work, to a more complex and less intelligible statement. But even in this first crude formulation we can detect the faint outlines of a science of risibility that may some day stand alongside the dismal science of economics and other serious studies.

Doubts arise. Were the interviewers carefully instructed to keep a straight face? Have upwardly mobile staff members been noticeably more jovial since this study was made? What about really cold countries like Greenland and really hot ones like Ghana? But let us not linger over such side-issues. Let us press on.

Inkeles claims that his rule is "contrary to popular belief." Whose popular belief? "Birds of a feather flock together," or "the poor ye have always with you" sound like popular beliefs. "The lower you are in social status the *more* likely etcetera" certainly doesn't. Put it in the vernacular: "Folks who ought to know their place laugh in the big shot's snarling face": and it still won't wash. Certainly not in America where the Cheshire grins of assorted millionaire poll cats have dissipated any lingering images of upperclass sobriety and reserve. We must conclude that the contrariness status of the Inkeles Rule remains unproved.*

This is unfortunate, because a scientific statement should, if possible, be contrary to *some* popular belief, in order to help stimulate non-conformity. Non-conformity is currently receiving the near-unanimous endorsement of scientists.

To advance the study of risible stratification we should do three things: 1. clarify our concepts (argue about words); 2. develop more precise research methods 3. place our formulas in a sound theoretical context (argue about what we have done).

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* For those wishing to gather evidence on popular belief we recommend either the Trilling Method of Insightful Observation or the Riesman Method of Incidental Content Analysis. Items supporting and refuting Inkeles should be set up in parallel columns, e.g.

Queen Victoria was not Amused.	*Old King Cole was a Merry Old Soul.*

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CONCEPT CLARIFICATION. What sort of upperclass laughter is being reported? Tearful or dry? Abundant or hollow? Wry or fatuous? Hearty or timid? Insane or Olympian? Ladylike or lascivious? Cruel or kindly? Hesitant or sidesplitting? Malevolent or reassuring? Crafty or childish? We do not know.

If we are to clarify laughter, we must distinguish it from certain stylized noises, impure varieties of laughing, some of which betoken a deep malady in the body social. These include:

1. Hostess Laughter, or the Tinkling Cymbal.
2. Elfin or Mocking Laughter (properly classified with mating cries and seduction maneuvers).
3. The Laugh of Misplaced Concreteness or Trill of Intrusion (associated with extremely embarrassing accidents).
4. The Cackle of Mutual Reassurance (Capitoline Geese Gabble). Of the various subtypes, Cocktail Party Shrill is best known.
5. Commercial Endemic Laughter (The presence of this pervasive type means nothing. Its absence signifies the imminent announcement of the death of a pope or popular comedian, or possibly a demonstration of pre-medication nasal distress).

This is only a beginning. Much more remains to be done in the classification and clarification of laughter.

STUDIED LAUGHTER: METHODOLOGY. The Inkeles Method of Self-Reporting has one glaring defect: it tempts respondents to cover up or exaggerate their laugh-outlet. Some better method must be found, too, for quantifying laugh-experience. (Even self-rating scales would help.) Everyone knows that one good solid laugh a week may be worth a thousand titters.

Eventually polling techniques must be supplemented by controlled experiments, participant observation (with the investigator laughing right with the group under study), and laboratory examinations to rule out genetic factors like basic ticklishness. Future studies will also measure and control the effect of other variables besides temperature and social status: age; age at which sense of humor matured, if ever; marital status; rural-urban residence; number and nature of laugh opportunities; regret over previous laugh experience; amount of solitary versus social laughter, including number of partners involved in social laughter experience at different ages.

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATION. What does it all mean? Do the upper classess really have more to laugh at? Or do people bubble upward through the social structure on the basis of their laugh buoyancy? It is still too early to answer such questions. But the Inkeles Rule should force us to reexamine two major cultural forces: Riantary Puritanism and Fun Morality.

The Riantary Puritan gives lipservice to laughter, asserting that, when exercised within legitimate social bonds for legitimate purposes, laughter is a healthy, even a holy, thing. But because he is afflicted with strong guilt feelings, he banishes laughter from many areas of life, and forces to seek an outlet in surreptitious and despiritualized forms. With his life thus cleft in two, the Riantary Puritan is apt to resent any implication that he takes himself very seriously and any implication that he doesn't.

Since he is subconsciously afraid of losing his sense of humor, he may often be reluctant, or even unable, to laugh at all. His search for reassurance may lead him to display compulsive buffoonery (part of the asininity syndrome) or to withdraw into symptomatic sedateness (showing neurotic pain reaction in the face of broad humor).

Riantary Puritanism frequently afflicts: members of left-wing sects; members of right-wing sects; liberals, conservatives and hybrids; men; humorists; military spokesmen; women; writers of letters to editors; people in warm countries; people in cold wars.

Patterns of traumatic sobriety naturally vary from group to group. Left-wing sects see nothing funny about their own frequent calls to action; rightwing sects see nothing funny about left wing sects; liberals, conservatives, and hybrids see nothing funny in their various favorite public figures figuring out their various favorite publics; humorists see nothing funny in each other; military spokesmen see nothing; and so on.

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Fun morality is often rejected out of hand by the Riantary Puritan to whom fun suggests spinelessness, superficiality and pleasure while morality suggests backbone, deep thinking and deprivation. But, in fact, fun morality rises out of, is a manifestation of, Riantary Puritanism.

As joy and laughter all but vanish from science, politics, work, social work, religion and social status, fun morality departments are springing up everywhere, with directors, curricula, budgets and fun-morale builders. The schools started it years ago with alloted times for the organized expression of joy and cheer. Industry and government soon followed. And today, in America at least, fun has its own trade journals and ideologues. A set time and place is being provided us all for the therapeutic indulgence of laughter, while other set times and places are reserved for being bored to death.

How many of the people who laughed during the past day, Professor Inkeles, laughed only during their scheduled times for laughing? That, indeed, is the crucial question.

THE MODERN CRISIS. Since decent, just and humane social relations cannot exist without opportunities of laughter for all, we face today a major crisis. Radical critics, recoiling from the more sordid aspects of fun morality (which aren't much fun and are quite immoral), have tended to adopt either the doleful demeanor of the Riantary Reactionary or the antiseptic attitude of the humorless liberal. More and more people must be asking themselves: Have we no other choice? Is there no alternative to the chill fanaticism of the chiliastic utopian but the loud laugh that bespeaks the vacant peace of mind?

We must take early warning from the Inkeles rule. Is this the kind of world, the kind of class-bound laughter, we want? Unless, eschewing all positive thinking, we press forward vigorously with Negative Laughing, we may find that all high seriousness has been swept away in a muddy flood of solemnity. Until we win back the right of laughter from the upper classes we can be assured that the world will be no laughing matter.

No Exit

The execution of Enrique Despaigne, a Cuban police lieutenant accused of many murders, was recently postponed for three hours upon the request of television cameramen who needed full daylight for maximum coverage.

In the mass society nothing can remain private—not even death. The spectator comes first and the exigencies of "coverage" prime any residual concern for the protection of individual feelings. Man in mass society is separated from the means of private experience just as the wage worker was earlier separated from the means of production. As the inner life of the mass man is impoverished, vicarious participation in the life of others has become a psychological equivalent, a needed stimulant.

The mass media "cover" a man whenever anything at all interesting happens to him: they "cover" him more relentlessly and efficiently than a secret police ever could. It is precisely at those moments of personal crisis and tragedy when a person is most in need of privacy that the media pursue him most vigorously--e.g., the obscene cruelty of the scramble of interviewers and cameramen who faced Arthur Godfrey the other day when he emerged from a hospital after a near-fatal cancer operation.

The atrophy of human sensibility in mass society is expressed and symbolized by the disappearance of privacy. As man has become expendable so have his feelings and emotions. There is something grotesque about a society which proclaims the dignity of the individual in its public charters and at the same time degrades him to an object of showmanship. The world has now indeed truly become a stage, a stage on which we enact the tragedies of our lives for the amusement of a mute audience. And there is not even a private exit.

L. C.

"We should take to socialism because it is ethically right, otherwise we shall stop short at collectivism."—ROBERT BLATCHFORD

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LETTERS

The Political Atmosphere

Editors:

Irving Howe asks the question, "a new political atmosphere in America?" in the Winter 1959 DISSENT.

The responses of the other editors (save perhaps Plastrik) are not encouraging. Mailer didn't vote, Rosenberg "could care less but with some difficulty." Most of the comments are surprisingly "anti-political."

In 1940 I was touring Norman Thomas *thru Iowa. Following a broadcast over a* local station the sympathetic manager told us he had voted for Thomas three times —in 1928, 1932, and in 1936 when he didn't vote. At that time a "plague on both your houses" attitude didn't seem anti-political *per se* since there seemed to be a third one; but it has little relevance in this decade. Political activity means a lot more than voting, but *among other things it does mean* party organization, campaigns and candidates, programs and platforms, elections and voting. Howe's suggestion that the Democratic party sometimes offers a sort of meaningful arena is encountered by Mailer's apocalyptic vision of a movement "which may be in its origins hostile to politics itself," and Rosenberg's observation that "American politics has become the art of the impossible."

I am alarmed by Mailer's apparent hope that a non- or anti-political *deus ex machina* is the only way of rescuing the radical from his isolation. This indicates a view of life as a race between world-wide garrison states headed for atomic destruction and the lumpen-proletariat mob headed for god knows what. This may yet prove to be an accurate appraisal of the 20th Century, God knows! But to *counter* Howe's suggestion that *perhaps* a potentially creative direction might exist with the notion that the destructive anti-political mob is our last best hope, is scarcely "rethinking the radical position."

Rosenberg's impossibilism is just that—the 1959 version of the tired radical's "dialectical" justification for his own isolation from the arena where people live and where, as Howe suggests, some viable decisions might have a chance of being made, or at least of being decently considered and fought about.

Coser repeats some of the cliches of DISSENT of five years ago: the mass-manipulating boogie men have got us. But inadvertently he does recognize Howe's main point. Coser informs us there were a few genuine liberals prepared to run in New York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts . . . and that Jim Burns, a liberal, did run . . . getting walloped. Now it's discouraging to lose, certainly. But the significant point escapes Coser. There were by his own admission some people struggling within the Democratic ranks whom he feels were pretty tolerable folk. Even in his select sample of 3 states—all within the shadow of the Empire State Building, as it were—one of these actually gained the nomination and waged a good campaign.

There appears to be a fundamental assumption underlying these criticisms of Howe's modest suggestions. In all cases we are told—*you can't win, you can't get the votes.* In the 30's radicals were convinced that eventually you could and would win. Regardless of the mystique invoked—human nature, the dialectic of history, the efficacy of education, pragmatic awareness of ends and means, the rewards of perseverance—the road to power would eventually be ours (or at least our program's). In the 50's of course such simple faiths in the inevitability of progress have been relegated to the ash can—or have they merely come in through the back door to emasculate us? Because liberals aren't *necessarily* going to be elected in the next period (which may be the last period) *then* Dissenters (we are advised) should ignore the struggles now developing within the Democratic Party. Isn't this the core of the criticism? Radicals and even lots of liberals used to recognize that mass organizations like political parties, trade unions, co-ops, and the like were inevitably a long ways from perfect. But this didn't stop the educational work, the struggles, the maneuverings, even when these meant defeat. All this was buoyed up with the feeling that "victory" was inevitable. With this doctrine gone, does it necessarily mean that all "mass work" is gone too?

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The references in the DISSENT discussion to the New Deal ignored the important lessons which could be learned from the 30's: What was valuable in the New Deal benefited in many ways from radical the ory, organization and propaganda. If the DISSENT experience indicates anything hopeful it is that ranks can be reformed, errors and ommissions reappraised, new programs for a new period considered (*vide* Howe), and new and younger recruits discovered. But if the end result of current furor at the DISSENT level is prayer for an Apocalypse, nothing has been gained from the lessons of recent decades.

Regrettably a fair number of radicals have always been too "pure" to communicate, or too naive to realize they weren't making contact. Splinter-itis dogged our ranks "to the left," while the New Deal picked us off one-by-one "on the right." And I realize that in any period (such as the immediate post-war days) where much attention has to be given to basic re-orientation and re-examination one can fall into this kind of pitfall if one is not very conscious of the danger and temptations of the "ivory tower." Surely the 30's and early 40's are litered with these bones! But the encouraging thing about Howe's piece is that it illustrates some lessons learned.

Ann Arbor BOB MARSHALL

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Editors:

Concerning the discussion among the DISSENT editors [Winter, 1959] on "a new atmosphere" in American politics: Irving Howe omitted mention of the fact that in several states "right-to-work" proposals were defeated by popular vote. This would certainly tend to support his view that the elections showed a decided, though ambiguous, reassertion of liberal sentiment. Indeed, if there was one issue that raised "class lines," this was it. How some of the other editors square the defeat of these proposals with their feeling that the election results showed merely a substitution of slick for clumsy politicians, I don't understand.

Ann Arbor ARNOLD SAMUELS

"The Democratic Vista"

Editors:

I had fond, foolish hopes of not being murdered in the pages of DISSENT, a magazine to which I have contributed and for which I have respect. But Hilton Kramer has done the job in his article on my book *The Democratic Vista,* called "To Hell With Culture." Of course, the book is a failure: it has sold only a few hundred copies and has not had, nor is likely to have, any ostensible influence. It is therefore sheer opportunism and culture-mongering for Kramer to pretend that it is an important document showing the bankruptcy of the liberal mind, etc. No book could be more obviously open to attack; that was implied by the nature of the subject. Kramer has made some good criticisms of it, with which I agree.

But as for "culture," one of the main charges Kramer brings against me is that I obscure ideas with cultural, sociological, and psychiatric symbolisms. He was not candid or attentive enough to report that I myself deplore this contemporary form of obscurantism (for example, at the end of chapter 3). Actually the whole tone and purpose of his article shows that it is he who is too "cultural," not I. That is, his approach is to point out that I am a Columbia professor, that I have certain friends, and so on: *ergo*—and the attack proceeds from the cultural symbols, rather than from the objective weighing of ideas.

Oh, well, the hell with Kramer—until he produces the incisive and convincing book on the modern situation which he says my book isn't. One prediction I'll make in advance: he'll play it cozy.

RICHARD CHASE

[Quotes were inadvertently omitted from the word "Culture" in the title of Mr. Kramer's article.—Ed.]

More on Arendt

Editors:

Is it too late to get into the Hannah Arendt War?

Apropos of segregated schooling, Miss Arendt says that if she were a Negro mother, she would not push her child into a situation where it was not wanted. But the question for the Negro is not one of pride. The question for the Negro is the much more practical one of: How do you make them want you? Dignified withdrawal may be a beautiful gesture, but it has the effect of cutting you off from the life of your time.

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If you are a Negro and "they" do not want you, it is because "they" are operating under the spell of fantasy, folk lore and mythology. In order to dispel this systematized illusion, you have to do what Miss Arendt calls "pushing your way in where you are not wanted." That is to say, you have to force situations of equality where the Caucasians can learn at first hand that there is no sense or reason to an automatic rejection on the mere ground of pigmentation.

Roosevelt's F.E.P.C. directive, during World War II, was issued less for reasons of idealism than because it was necessary to tap every last resource of manpower. However, the actual effect of that directive was to show a great many white people that nothing disastrous would happen if they worked in a war plant next to a Negro.

One of the oldest and most hackneyed arguments for preserving the status quo of inequality is that "you can't change the way people feel by passing laws." But by passing laws—and enforcing them—you can change the situations in which people find themselves, and that very often has the effect of changing the way they feel.

This is very possibly the reason why Negroes are not at the moment much interested in repealing the laws against intermarriage. Once there is a genuine equality of job opportunity and schooling, the laws against intermarriage will collapse of their own weight.

MARGARET HALSEY

Who Sees What?

Editors:

Just wanted to say how stimulating I found the recent issue of DISSENT.

And yet, there is something about it more disturbing than stimulating. For men who are dedicated to a form of "open society," DISSENT gives the impression of a closed in, confined space. I have the feeling that a group of able men are fiercely arguing with each other in a bathysphere . . .

New York JOSEPH R. STAROBIN

[A bathysphere is an object by means of which it is possible to reach and see what would otherwise not be visible.—Ed.]

The Academic Life

Editors:

Thank you for your fine review of *The Academic Marketplace*. [DISSENT, Winter 1959.] Despite the curious "objectivity" of the authors and their lack of "moral imagination"; their apparent decision not to take any broad view of the causes and cures of the phenomenon you so accurately call "the professor as commodity"; the book does seem to have caused a few ripples on the still pool of academic complacency . . .

To me the most significant remark in Coser's review was to the effect that the new thing we learn about the academies is the extent to which the professors have taken the commodity view of themselves. It is no longer merely the contempt of the trustees and the administration, but self-contempt.

The deepest cause for this feeling, as I see it, is the prevailing *weltanschauung* of our society. I am inclined to think that the failure of American philosophy is germane to this problem—as well as the social, economic and political causes which operate in the Eisenhower age. And I do not mean anything like "the pragmatic acquiescence" of which Lewis Mumford was wont to speak. Pragmatic philosophy was a fighting intellectual position as compared with the varieties of analytical logicism now prevailing in our universities. The humanities have virtually dropped out of the picture because they lack the lead of a meaningful philosophical concern with values and ethics. Moreover the social sciences seem all too often to settle for description and objectivity in accordance with what I would consider a mistaken notion of scientific methodology. One can safely say that John Dewey lost his battle for a reconciliation of science and value . . .

The prevailing ideal of specialization and strict adherence to narrowly defined "fields" or "disciplines" is another anti-intellectual force. There is a prevailing technicality and pomposity about the specialist which is deeply built in to the organization of the curriculum itself. The professor is not only fantastically preoccupied with committee work and letters of recommendation and grinding out articles for professional journals; he is simply too busy *to think*. After all how can thought compare with a definitive bibliography? Not only that, but how can you talk to your colleagues about their work or about your own if you have to cope with a separate technical vocabulary in each field? Stringfellow Barr's acid satire

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on sociologese in his novel *Purely Academic* is not a bit unfair to the average sociologist (although the *real* sociologists are still writing in English).

Then one must mention the lack of professional *esprit de corps* as a cause of the current situation. John Jay Chapman summed it up very adequately: "The average professor in an American college will look on an act of injustice done to a brother professor with the same unconcern as the rabbit who is not attacked watches the ferret pursue his brother up and down through the warren... We know of course that it would cost the non-attacked rabbit his place to express sympathy for the martyr; and the non-attacked is poor and has offspring, and hopes of advancement." *Has off-spring!* Man, I'll say he has off-spring. The college presidents love children, especially the children of their junior faculty members and in large numbers. Quite obviously you can hold on to an instructor or assistant professor under sweatbox conditions and on a series of one-year contracts (after which he may be conveniently dropped) if the man is feeding four or five little mouths and looking forward with pleasure to the sixth. But one has increasingly the impression that the administrators don't want to hire anyone *seriously* until he has become a full professor with a big reputation. There is not only the great pressure for notoriety and prestige, as remarked first by Veblen and now by Caplow and McGee, but there is also a total lack of responsible provision for developing younger men to replace the present glamor boys. Much better hire a retired professor from one of the big universities for a year or two, at a reduced salary, than risk an investment in some unknown who claims to be writing a book. One is reminded of the problems of the reforestation service. It probably takes less time to grow a scholar than an oak, but there must be *some* provision for growth...

It would occur to any group of exploited men except professors to *organize*. But the academicians have a whole bundle of answers for that one, many of which turn on such myths as those of the gentlemen scholars and the ancient prerogatives of academic leisure.

Finally there needs to be a word about the inflammatory subject of academic freedom. Professor MacIver has written a good book on *Academic Freedom in Our Time*, but there is one point that he has neglected. Like all American institutions, the colleges must currently operate under the Smith Act. The Smith Act, however leniently or harshly interpreted by the courts, is a law against certain forms of *advocation*. And the fact of the matter is that however little one may be interested in having anyone advocate revolution or violence—or say homicide or pornography—as soon as there is *any* law about what one may legally *advocate*, freedom of expression begins to dry up...

What is to be done? John Galbraith is representative of liberal opinion in pinning his hopes for social improvement on education. You have got to start somewhere and to many it seems the colleges are the place to start. I do not agree. I think the colleges may be among the very last places where any new spirit of freedom will arise because of the entrenchment of time-servers and orgmen in them... We may be back in the age-old *back to the catacombs* situation again, provided one does not confuse the catacombs with the well-heeled and complacent churches and synagogues. Meanwhile it looks to me as though the fate of our culture hangs on the lonely individual who somehow contrives to think and write honestly and courageously...

Claremont, Cal. EDWIN HALSEY

Sacramento Group

Editors:

A small group of Socialists is in the process of forming a discussion group to study current issues.

All persons in the Sacramento area who might be interested in joining such a group are invited to contact Elmer and Mary Daniels, 4420 Ravenwood Ave. Sacramento 21, Calif. for further information. MARY DANIELS

Fresno Readers?

Editors:

As a reader of Dissent I would very much like to meet other Fresno readers of the journal and would much appreciate if you could direct such possible contacts to me. Perhaps a discussion group could be formed.

My address is: 955 E. Cornell Avenue, Fresno 4; my telephone: BAldwin 9-1963.

(Mrs.) Matilda Robbins

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FACT AND FICTION ON FOREIGN AID

A Critique of "The Ugly American"

by

JOSEPH BUTTINGER

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Introduction

The name of Joseph Buttinger first became familiar to the American political public several years ago, when he published his book *In the Twilight of Socialism.* Partly a memoir of his experience as leader of the underground socialist movement which fought the Austrian fascist government during the thirties, this book was also an important document about the crisis of modern socialism.

Since then Mr. Buttinger has occupied himself with a variety of political and intellectual tasks. He has written a study of Indochinese history, *The Smaller Dragon,* which is an outgrowth of his deep concern with the struggle of the people of Vietnam to secure its freedom and independence from both French and Communist imperialism. As an active figure in the International Rescue Committee, he has worked hard to help political refugees, both in Asia and Europe. And as a socialist, he has been a loyal friend of DISSENT, having, in fact, recently joined our editorial board.

The essay that follows was submitted by Joseph Buttinger as a contribution to the understanding of a crucial problem: how can effective aid be given to the underdeveloped countries so as to raise their standards of living, help them move toward political freedom and check the influence of Communism? To a large extent, the essay consists of a sustained polemic against the "novel," *The Ugly American,* a book, says Joseph Buttinger, which has been influential far beyond its merits and which, by advancing inaccurate, simplistic and sensationalistic criticisms of foreign aid to Asia, manages to do several harmful things simultaneously: it heartens those neo-isolationists who use it to propose an abandonment of aid to the Asian countries, it obscures the delicate complexities of the problem through coarse fictionalizing, and it stands in the way of the more serious and basic criticisms to which American aid should be subjected.

We think that Joseph Buttinger's polemic should therefore be of interest even to those who have little interest in *The Ugly American* itself, since it is the kind of polemic that raises general issues of far greater consequence than the errors, misinformation and glibness that it attacks. I might add that the essay can be read as an example of a genre which in America has been inadequately cultivated: the criticism of mass culture in the field of politics. For what Mr. Buttinger is doing here is showing how the catchwords and conceptions of liberalism can be appropriated by sensationalistic writers for the popular market and thereby put to quite illiberal uses. I. H.

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PART 1

I

What Shakespeare says in *Twelfth Night* about greatness in men one could also say about that mysterious something in books that makes them bestsellers: Some are born with it, some achieve it, and some have it thrust upon them. An example of a peculiar kind of thrusting is the public history of *The Ugly American* by William J. Lederer and Eugene Burdick. This "novel" about American diplomacy and foreign aid in Southeast Asia has now been on the bestseller lists for almost seven months, basking in the flattering vicinity of *Lolita* and *Doctor Zhivago*. At this date it is still defying its destiny, which is to drop into the ocean of public indifference where it will lie until Hollywood announces its resurrection.[1]

If I say that its market success was thrust upon *The Ugly American,* the reason is not only my belief that this book is without intrinsic literary value. The reward of high sales is not one reserved only for good books. But in the case of *The Ugly American,* success was due neither to advertising and the many enthusiastic reviews nor to the fair reputation Lederer and Burdick had separately gained with their earlier writings. Much of the praise for *The Ugly American* was of an ambiguous nature. Advertising was initially by no means powerful enough to secure for *The Ugly American* the bestseller's privilege of unpaid promotion. Its demerits might have appealed to an even larger public of doubtful literary taste (remember *Peyton Place* or *Forever Amber*), in which case *The Ugly American,* once it had somehow gained a foothold among the bestsellers of 1958, might well have sold half a million copies and disgraced the bestseller lists for more months than most books in America are remembered.[2] If it did not, the reason may simply be that for a work of fiction to become an exceptionally successful bestseller it is perhaps not quite enough to be a really bad book.

How then did *The Ugly American* make the bestseller lists at all and subsequently manage to occupy for months a most advantageous position? For two reasons, both entirely unconnected with its intrinsic quality.

The first of these reasons was that *The Ugly American* enjoyed a strong initial promotion not generally available to works of fiction, either good or bad, a promotion that made it what its publishers call "the best selling novel that has become an affair of state." This is what happened: Shortly before and right after publication, *The Ugly American* was bought and distributed in unusually great numbers by private

1 According to a *New York Times* report from Hollywood of January 26, 1959, Universal-International has obtained motion-picture rights to *The Ugly American.*

2 At this date, about 150,000 copies of *The Ugly American* have been sold.

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parties interested in securing for it "the largest possible audience of thinking Americans," as the book's jacket says. Although no one will ever be able to determine accurately the volume of these purchases—it seems that thousands, not just hundreds of copies were thus sold—it was big enough to betray an organized effort and at the same time to tip the delicate balance, so characteristic for the American book market, between obscurity and fame.

An advertisement in the *New York Times* of January 23 (and on a few subsequent dates) indicates that even months after publication this kind of promotion was considered necessary for *The Ugly American*'s success. As part of this advertisement, the publishers (Norton & Co.) reproduce a letter which is signed by Morris Ernst and endorsed by Senators John F. Kennedy and Clair Engle, the Rt. Rev. James A. Pike (Bishop of California), Julie d'Estournelles (Woodrow Wilson Foundation), and Harold H. Stern. "These distinguished citizens," we are told, "sent this letter, with a copy of *The Ugly American,* to every member of the United States Senate." Because they believe this book to be "of importance to the nation," they urge the Senators "in the strongest terms" to read it. The letter also informs the Senators that the President himself has read *The Ugly American* and that this fact was largely responsible for the Draper Committee, created to investigate once more our entire aid program. But neither the publishers nor Morris Ernst tells us who paid for the 98 copies that went to the Senate, nor how many of the people who signed this particular recommendation of *The Ugly American* have actually read the book.

WHAT PURPOSE did the promoters of *The Ugly American* have in mind? To answer this question, we do not have to ask publishers and dealers for the names of the people (and organizations) who delighted them with unusually large orders. It is sufficient to know who were the recipients of this present: they were members of Congress, newspaper editors, writers on foreign affairs, commentators on radio and television, leaders of business, government officials, and countless other individuals believed to possess some influence in public life. In paying for these copies, the sponsors of *The Ugly American* intended no invitation to a literary feast. They meant their present to be a call to political action. Indeed, this is the most important item of information for anyone who tries to explain *The Ugly American's* success: that a special campaign was made in anticipation of the book's political effect.

This unusual promotion of a "novel" was undertaken without in the least falsifying the true and original intentions of its two authors. Although properly listed as fiction, *The Ugly American* is not really a book about the problems and fates of human beings. It is written in a style in which not even a contemporary Dostoevsky could tell us anything about a person's inner life. But even if its literary values were a little more than zero, *The Ugly American* would still be essentially a book about politics, or, to be more precise, a book about United

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States aid policy and American government officials in Southeast Asia.

One does not have to make a guess in order to know what was on Lederer's and Burdick's minds when they started to collaborate, by means of long distance telephone and tape recorders, on their stories of "almost comic-strip simplicity"[3] about the "stupid marplots, innocent third-raters, squanderers, cookie-pushers, clowns and bibulous, boastful parasites"[4] who allegedly represent America abroad. They were not at all after the aims normally pursued with works of fiction. Their aim was the same as that of the people who bought *The Ugly American* by the carload because they hoped this book, if read "at a million American firesides, would loosen upon this Congress, perhaps upon the Administration, a storm that would blow them off the magic carpet they have inhabited these many years."[5]

Obviously, this book which James A. Michener found "delightfully readable," John P. Marquand "urgent and fascinating," Morris Ernst "squarely based on fact," Max Lerner "full of concreteness and substance," and the publishers themselves "wonderfully humorous" was written as "a deadly warning... entertainingly... given"[6] in order to show that "our free life well may be lost in a succession of bits and fragments," as the authors say, after having warned us that the Russians, unless our foreign service and foreign aid personnel mend their ways, "will win without firing a shot..."[7]

I believe it was in serious anticipation of these prospects (and possibly because they think that Cassandra was a bore) that Lederer and Burdick decided to make *The Ugly American* "consistently entertaining," to use the words of the *New York Times.* A work of fiction, the authors thought, would enable them to reach people who normally do not read political books. But they did not produce a "novel," as the publishers stubbornly insist on calling *The Ugly American;* Lederer and Burdick knew that their subject could be treated better in a volume of short stories, all of them designed to arouse indignation and simultaneously provide amusement about the deplorable facts behind our political failures abroad. And so they proceeded. "This book was written as fiction," they say in their preface, adding: "but it is based on fact." Which, I suppose, must mean: although written *in the form of fiction,* what this book says ought not to be regarded as fiction but should be taken as fact. To make sure that no reader doubts to what extent they have based their stories on fact, Lederer and Burdick conclude their book with a fifteen-page "factual epilogue." There they give what they consider to be a true picture of our diplomatic and foreign aid activities in Southeast Asia, without, however, explaining what makes them believe that they, as authors of a book on contemporary politics can get away with putting fiction in place of fact.

[3] *Saturday Review,* October 4, 1958.
[4] Raymond Moley, in *Newsweek,* December 1, 1958.
[5] *ibid.*
[6] *Washington Post,* October 5, 1958.
[7] *The Ugly American,* Factual Epilogue, pp. 271 and 269.

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About this "device by which the authors have reached a very large popular audience"[8] I shall have more to say later on. Right now I should confess that I disapprove of this book not only because it failed to provide me with the sensations I expect of a work of fiction; the main reason I condemn *The Ugly American* is the flagrant manner in which it distorts, ignores, or contradicts what in respect to our aid and diplomacy in Southeast Asia I have learned to regard as the essential facts.

The reader will now rightly expect me to justify this indictment by proving how worthless as fiction and untrue to fact *The Ugly American* is. I shall not avoid this obligation, but first I would like to show that promotion by people who could afford to buy more than one copy was not the only reason for its surprising success and for its becoming an "affair of state." I shall try to do this with a few general observations on America's present state of mind in regard to foreign policy and foreign aid. In these observations, the reader will find the second of my reasons for saying that the "greatness" of high sales was thrust upon this book.

II

It seems, at least from time to time, that the American reading public is by no means as rigidly indifferent to politics as the many disappointed agitators, unsupported reformers and unsaleable authors perennially maintain. Above all, Americans have during the last ten years shown an increasing, if still unsteady concern for "world affairs." Ever since we lost our dream of a stable peace and our belief in certain prosperity for all mankind in the "One World" of our pre-Potsdam aspirations, American political thinking in regard to the world, though clouded by weariness and fear, has been characterized by an intensity and seriousness of which one would only wish that it were matched by an equal degree of understanding. The great number of people whom genuine despair keeps driving into the ranks of the indifferent or cynical is no proof against this contention; it only stresses how strongly our attitudes are molded by this concern. Except for the years of the two World Wars, there have never been more people than now in this country who realized how grossly its security and welfare would be neglected if we professed that the security and welfare of other nations is beyond American preoccupation. Every year brings an increase in the number of books, articles, and reports over the air, the writers of which all seem to have learned that one can serve the old tenets of isolationism to the American public only at the risk of being considered a crank. If this were not true, the so-called Marshall Plan for Europe and our ongoing programs of military and economic aid to some fifty non-Communist countries could never have overcome the opposition of a Congress that reacts to the necessity of appropriating the required money like a neurotic obsessed by starvation fears. (Nor would *The Saturday Evening Post* have serialized *The Ugly American* if its editors

[8] Morris Ernst, in his letter to the members of the Senate.

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had not been convinced that a popular treatment of the issues of foreign aid would find a large and receptive audience.)

Unfortunately, the people who most vigorously preach the gospel of America's involvement with the fate of the world are largely dominated by two entirely different but equally problematic ways of thinking in regard to American political action abroad. There are on the one side the military-minded with their narrow concept that success in the arena of power politics depends not so much on our heads as on our war-heads. Then there are those for whom an American foreign policy or aid program is meaningless if it is not inspired by moralistic considerations, usually of a kind that history has long proven to be inapplicable to the realities of international politics. These attitudes help to explain the two astonishing extremes that our vacillating foreign policy is capable of reaching.

MUCH HAS BEEN SAID lately about the extent to which a strictly military approach impairs our effectiveness in foreign affairs; but there is still little understanding of the vices inherent in another and equally widespread approach to foreign aid. I am referring to the naive contention that our bases and propaganda and the billions we spend for foreign aid are the selfless performance of a historical duty for which our wealth and power, as well as our generosity, have made us fit. Seen from this position of gallant American conceit, no action is worthwhile, no expense defensible and all concern misplaced unless the result of our efforts is that someone or something is being "saved." With such moral inspiration, the ultimate aim of our foreign policy must naturally go far beyond the mere saving of "democracy" in Lebanon or Guatemala, or of what ought to be "saved" in the Far East. The inner logic of this position inevitably leads to an American obligation to "save the world."

The results of a policy that nourishes such fantastic expectations can hardly be anything but a never-ending chain of "losses" and "defeats." To "save the world" exceeds by far the capability of any one power, no matter how easy it may already be for several to destroy the world. In fact, even to "save" some minor strategic position, in the sense of forcing an unwilling country to change its present stand, has now become virtually impossible, both for the United States and Russia, without unleashing the accumulated forces of universal destruction.

American foreign policy in this historical period will therefore never seem even modestly successful to Americans and will remain the major source of American political despair if what we expect it to achieve continues to be the unattainable goal of a world for whose problems we can provide unfailing solutions and from which the nightmare of nuclear war has been lifted for good. It is of course only natural for our foreign policy makers to desire that all non-Communist nations understand, and approve of, the position we take against further Communist expansion. But if the acceptance by others of our political ideas, the imitation of our institutions, and the adherence to our social

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and economic creeds are regarded as the main criteria of our diplomatic success, we had better get ready for an unending series of new "American failures"—and also for a cavalcade of new books in which new experts denounce and bemoan every one of our new "losses" even if what we have lost has never really belonged to us.

I am aware that these pages read like a defense of the mistakes and blunders we undoubtedly make in our foreign policy, and that I am exposing myself to the harsh criticism that such leniency toward our State Department and all other foreign service branches is likely to attract. The more patient reader will soon find out that I have my own thoughts on this subject, and will then also understand why I reject the most popular of the premises from which the majority of Americans criticize our foreign policy and programs of foreign aid. However, although I regret the widespread indignation over the slight returns in popularity that our generous disbursements produce among the nations we aid, I fully share the general sentiment of dismay over the manifest shortcomings of our efforts. Neither these shortcomings nor the fact that there is a general awareness of them can be denied. Furthermore, what is true about our discussions on foreign policy in general is doubly true for our national disputes about both the theory and the practice of foreign aid: they proceed within an ever widening realm of misgivings, misgivings that no official assurances at home or governmental expressions of gratitude abroad are able to dispel.

One feature of these disputes is that the many participants who would "not give a damn" if someone else paid the bill have lately begun to dominate them with their petulance and lack of understanding. Even firm supporters of our foreign aid policy are now likely to talk only on the defensive and frequently even sneer at our so-called idealism, for which our only reward is said to be a growing "anti-Americanism" all over the world. Most newspapers and magazines stress more and more the negative side in discussing our foreign aid. Minor failures, or explicable as well as unavoidable mistakes, are belabored until they yield some aspect of the scandalous, which is all that seems newsworthy on this subject. Last year, our newspapers and magazines gave us one dose after another of downright unpleasant news about the waste, inefficiency, and lack of meaningful projects that supposedly characterize the administration of American foreign aid. To anyone familiar with the real problems, these often sensational reports—forerunners, as it were, of *The Ugly American*—though far from convincing, are nevertheless as exasperating as they must be to the uninformed wider public interested in international affairs.

Thus it has come about that even the stoutest proponents of American economic and military assistance to non-Communist countries are now half-hearted in the defense, confused about the practice, and doubtful about the aims of our entire program of foreign aid.

III

In view of this generally recognized national mood, no ex-

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ceptional perspicacy was required on the part of the publishers (and promoters) of *The Ugly American* to realize that luck had presented them with a "bombshell of a book."[9] Politically annoyed people who more often than not will refuse to listen to quiet reason on a controversial issue rarely fail to be aroused by an intemperate attack spiced with sensational accusations. All that was needed was to let the public know that that was what *The Ugly American* supplied. The gravity of the subject would make newspapers and magazines pay immediate attention to the book, the more so as it was said to be "not only important but consistently entertaining."[10] I doubt whether those who bought it for entertainment were as numerous as the buyers whose motive was a serious political concern. I meet only the later kind, most of whom expected *The Ugly American* to free them from their uncertainty in regard to the facts and to help them decide what ought to be done about foreign aid.

It was the reviewers who created these expectations. Although only a few were deceived about *The Ugly American*'s value as a work of fiction, virtually all of them contributed to its success.[11] Most reviewers proceeded like Maya Pines, who started out by saying that the book was written with the "subtlety of a sledge hammer," but then lacked both the heart and the sagacity to condemn it on any other score.[12] Indeed, only if the reviewers had consisted exclusively of experts capable as well as determined to pick out the book's faults and contradictions could their general verdict have been less favorable than it was. The subject of foreign aid is a complex one; it cannot be treated without expert knowledge, and anyone who tries to present it as simple is likely to be incorrect and unfair. This explains both the general ignorance on the subject and the prevalence of crude misconceptions. And who would have the courage—provided he found the indispensable arguments—to quarrel with the objectives that Lederer and Burdick apparently pursue? Even the most critical reviews I have read contain references to the authors' good intentions that amount to a bashful recommendation for their book. "Broad as they are," says Hugo Jaeckel in his excellent review in *The New Leader,* "the targets chosen are valid ones and the anger expended in hitting them seems sincere." More ambiguous is the anonymous reviewer who criticized the book in *The Christian Science Monitor.* First he tells us that "the incidents recounted sound palpably contrived despite their advertised origin in fact"; he reproaches the authors for having "indulged freely in oversimplification, often to the point of absurdity"; "exaggeration is rife," he continues, and "most of the characters are caricatures and grotesque

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9 *New York Herald Tribune,* Book Review, October 5, 1958.
10 Robert Trumbull, in *The New York Times,* Book Review, October 5, 1958.
11 I find it more remarkable that a paper like the *London Times* (in its Literary Supplement of February 13, 1959) swallows the inventions and absurdities of *The Ugly American* hook, line, and sinker. And so does the London *Economist,* which goes even farther than the *Times* in dropping its customary sophistication.
12 *The Reporter,* October 16, 1958.

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ones at that," but then he finds nevertheless enough that is positive and worthwhile in this book to conclude that "no thoughtful reader will be able to dismiss *The Ugly American* lightly."

This ambiguous attitude seems to justify the many people who praise the book without having read it, leading them to believe that *The Ugly American* has unveiled the scandal of American political negligence and ineptitude in Southeast Asia, and supporting their conviction that no criticism can be too harsh for the evils Lederer and Burdick have chosen to attack.

IV

These evils have a wide range, and if *The Ugly American* makes little distinction between the trivial and the tragic, this should not serve as an excuse to belittle the painful mistakes and serious offenses of which our foreign services are guilty. It is certainly valuable to show to a large American audience what damage is constantly being done by our inability to understand alien cultures, our unwillingness to learn foreign languages, and by the "social incest" practiced behind the "sanitary curtain" that our germ-conscious representatives have put up in too many countries between themselves and the local populations. But in attacking undeniable shortcomings and abuses many of the book's arguments are spoiled by loose generalization. Because I believe Chester Bowles was a splendid American ambassador to India, I hesitate to endorse *The Ugly American*'s fierce condemnation of political appointments to diplomatic posts; but that our foreign services are in need of "well-trained, well-chosen, hard-working and dedicated professionals" is a contention with which not even defenders of our State Department, if any such still exist, are likely to disagree.

This, however, exhausts the subjects for the treatment of which I am willing to give Lederer and Burdick some measure of credit. The rest, which is only a little less than the entire book, must be rejected, notwithstanding the many random accuracies that flicker over *The Ugly American*'s 285 pages. There is no truth in the book's message to the American public that the vast majority of our officials in Southeast Asia are still untrained and inexperienced, (which they certainly were five years ago, the period in which most of *The Ugly American*'s stories are placed); that they are unwilling to learn, uninterested in their work, prejudiced against the local people, concerned chiefly with personal comfort, opposed to working outside the big cities, disinclined to read books, and keen only to get to their frequent gatherings for the consumption of hard liquor—whereupon they are likely to discuss political secrets in front of the Communist spies they stupidly employ.

I know it is the sign of a good American not to miss an opportunity to denounce the government bureaucrats and to see virtue in our national prejudice according to which a public official who knows and does his job is as rare as an "honest politician." Much as I would like to be among the first to criticize our foreign policy-makers and the performance of our officials abroad, I have no taste for the recurrent

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manifestations of American patriotic masochism of which Lederer and Burdick are our latest examples. The picture they paint of our diplomatic and foreign aid personnel in Southeast Asia is not only unjust —reason enough to reject it; but like its invented political background, it is also utterly untrue and offensive.

The Ugly American's attacks on the people who work for our government abroad are at least thinly related to some reality and become nonsensical mainly through boundless exaggeration. This is not the case with most other statements, theories, and alleged facts in this book. Their absurdity is quite untainted by either fact or reason, as anyone whose knowledge of Southeast Asia is not nullified by a lack of political judgment will see if he reads the book. Let no one believe that this refers to such matters as the vehemence with which Lederer and Burdick condemn our officials abroad for mixing the hardships of diplomacy with the pleasures of cocktails, or for trusting their native employees to faithfully translate what is locally written. It is probably a good idea for us (as Vice President Nixon said long ago after he returned from a trip to Southeast Asia) to reduce the number of gatherings intended to foster political harmony through social drinking. We should do this even if we reject the notion that a ritual regarded as diplomatic virtue if performed by the Russians with vodka becomes diplomatic vice if Americans perform it with whiskey and gin. And we must certainly demand (as did Secretary of State Dulles long before Lederer and Burdick) that our diplomats speak the language of the country in which they are stationed. We must insist on this, even if we can laugh at *The Ugly American*'s warning that local interpreters cannot be trusted to tell Americans the truth. No, the real absurdities of this book have to do with matters of greater importance, matters that are truly fundamental for a clarification and an effective performance of America's task in the East. They concern the question of how a people can have political comprehension of any other if it is unaware of the permanent need to politically comprehend itself; they touch upon the problem of how a nation that takes the superiority of its political institutions and aims for granted can produce enough individuals capable of understanding foreigners whose beliefs and desires contradict their own; they relate to the many reasons why we fail to realize the effect Communism may have on people with whom we differ in needs and ideas more than in the colors of our skins; and they have to do with our self-righteous notions of what constitutes the "good" and the "truth" of politics, notions that narrow our concepts for action and make them unworkable almost as soon as we leave our shores.

It is my conviction that every move toward a better understanding of other countries and for a more effective American foreign policy will be arrested if we listen to people who tell us what Lederer and Burdick untiringly repeat: that the task of making oneself liked and of becoming politically influential abroad is really quite simple. For according to *The Ugly American,* most of our present troubles in Southeast Asia will be at an end if we train better diplomats, become better

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linguists, stop getting drunk, replace "bureaucrats" with missionaries and technicians, leave the cities and work in the villages, breed fatter chickens abroad instead of building highways and dams, make our overseas officials renounce their personal comforts and preferably also disregard their good health, reveal to the "natives" the "truth" about Communism, read the books our enemies have foolishly written in order to acquaint us with their true intentions—and above all beware of spies. The fundamental question of how the concrete purposes and overall aims of American policy in Asia might enhance or diminish the effectiveness of our officials abroad is never even mentioned in this book.

Although most of our present shortcomings in diplomacy are rooted in our history and culture, there will always be merit in criticizing the people and methods our government employs in order to implement our foreign policy. Lederer and Burdick must have been strongly aware of the need that exists for a book to castigate the shortcomings, sins of omission and blunders that in the eyes of Asia falsify America's real political will. But this task could have been carried out only with a work of the highest historical veracity and the profoundest political insight. Far from helping Americans to overcome their perplexity and irresolution in regard to the problems of foreign aid, *The Ugly American* only adds to the existing confusion and has in fact already strengthened the pernicious idea that we might as well abandon a political battlefield on which it is so difficult for us to excel.

This is the reason why it is necessary to refute this book. I condemn it on every score I can think of, and I have no doubt that I will be able to justify my condemnation of it by citing the most telling examples of its political inanity, its distortion of fact, and its insidious attacks against the cause it allegedly defends.

V

But before I proceed to prove these charges against *The Ugly American,* I would like to make a point which may well render it superfluous for many readers to bother with a detailed refutation of what the authors relate and preach. I refer to the peculiar license Lederer and Burdick have arrogated to themselves in their manner of treating as fiction what they want us to accept as fact.

I puzzled a long time over the first paragraph of *The Ugly American* which begins, in "A Note from the Authors," with the statement that the book was written "as fiction" although it is based on fact. Something in this apparently innocent phrase disturbed me from the beginning. I could not help returning to it frequently while reading the book, searching with growing discomfort for an explanation of what I stubbornly felt to be the case: that there was a basic untruth here, that it contained some subtle and vicious contradiction which might well be the key to both the falseness and tastelessness of the whole book. What sense would there be in saying of works that *are* real fiction, such as *For Whom The Bell Tolls,* or *Sunrise at Campobello,* that they were written *as* fiction, or what need in claiming for

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War and Peace that it is "based on fact"? For the true writer of fiction who has something more important to say than has the mere reporter of facts, no conflict exists between fact and fiction. Tolstoy modelled his Napoleon, Hemingway his André Marty, and Schary his Franklin D. Roosevelt as closely and faithfully on their known real characters as they could; they put these in surroundings of verifiable historical "facts," and yet we would not accept the fiction of these authors as a substitute for factual history. Schary, for instance, when dramatizing a period in the public and family life of Roosevelt, changed no names, made Roosevelt not a politician of Australia or of some imaginary country, did not distort the setting of significant or even trivial and often quite delicate facts that constituted his hero's environment, and still was able to give us more than just a catalogue of accurately connected facts. There is indeed no reason why an author of fiction who recreates known characters and real events should not produce a valid piece of literary art by being true to the smallest of all verifiable facts.

IT IS IN THE AUTHORS' rejection of this truth that I find the explanation for *The Ugly American*'s double failure: *this book neither gives us real facts nor is it good fiction.* Unlike Schary, Lederer and Burdick carefully avoid giving the people they describe their real names. Names, places, events, they say in their preface, are "our invention." Let us admit that there are good reasons for not using the real names of the people about whom they write. But if they invented places, events and names, why did they not invent *all* the characters they portray, instead of rather ungallantly making some of them recognizable for anyone familiar with our diplomatic services in the area?

This, however, contradicts only in a minor way what Lederer and Burdick say about the relationship between their facts and their fiction. A truly fundamental contradiction appears if we look closely at their claim that their book is "the rendering of fact into fiction" and then compare this claim with their astonishing admission that not only are the places they describe invented but also the events. Whoever is convinced that *The Ugly American* was written throughout in good faith is forced by this statement to draw the following conclusion: Lederer and Burdick really believe that the facts they collected in various and vastly different countries retain their validity outside the context of reality in which they were produced and that a political fact thus isolated can still have a meaning or remain useful for conveying a particular truth.

But no fact, let alone a political fact, can survive such drastic treatment. All political events arise out of a setting of circumstances and personal involvements that are uniquely their own; they are interesting as facts only through the very singularity and concreteness that distinguish them from all others; whatever meaning and quality they possess is as inseparable from their peculiar context of human intelligence and passion as it is from time and place. Dealing in the

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main with a country of their own invention therefore does not only mean that the facts Lederer and Burdick present have nowhere existed exactly as they describe them, or that our authors merely foster erroneous ideas about the possibility of applying experiences gained in one country to any other. What they are doing is much worse. By disregarding, as it were, the individuality of every fact or event, they deprive us (after having first deprived themselves), of the only key to an understanding of politics as a world of thought and human action. The facts with which they fill their book, because they concern on the whole a country that exists only in their imagination, are as unreal as only a "fact" outside the realm of actual life can be.

Still, if Lederer and Burdick had come up with some good political fiction, we would easily have forgiven them their curious way of handling contemporary political reality. They could have written about fictional characters in a setting of their invention and still have told us many truths about ourselves and our relations to the peoples of Asia whom, with our diplomacy, propaganda and aid, we are so anxiously trying to affect. An example of how a novel can increase our understanding of contemporary history and politics is Joseph Conrad's *Nostromo*.[13] The country it describes goes through a painful process of social and political transformation. It is troubled by a series of violent internal upheavals which reveal many of the ugliest features of political violence, which we have become accustomed to regard as Fascist or Communist inventions. There is also an early kind of "anti-Americanism," which no trick of political sophistry could possibly attribute to American government aid. We know that the Republic of Costaguana is no real country but a product of Conrad's imagination, yet no one who reads this novel can fail to perceive its political insight and fidelity to significant detail.

The truth of fiction can indeed be of a quality that makes the claim of factual accuracy superfluous. Fiction goes beyond facts by adding to or extracting from them truths which no mere reporting of facts can reveal. But no matter what merit such fiction may have as a carrier of general political truths, it can never pass as accurate reporting of contemporary fact for the purpose of *specific* political argumentation.

Lederer and Burdick, in writing *The Ugly American,* quite obviously did not aspire to produce a work of literary perfection. They approached their subject in a style and manner that sacrifice all claim to art to their pretension of factually accurate reproduction of reality, in a work of fiction admittedly based on invented names, places, and events. Unaware of the utter inadequacy of their approach, their stories and fictional documents add up to such an atrocious misrepresentation of facts that even the book's minor accuracies disappear behind its dominant features of unreality and falseness.

[13] A contemporary political novel about the French Foreign Service is *Les Ambassades,* by Roger Peyrefitte.

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PART 2

I

If *The Ugly American* were only another short-lived bestseller and not also a weapon in the hands of the enemies of foreign aid, I would now repeat that the book is worthless as fiction and untrue to fact, and be done with it. But because this "novel" is doing political harm, I shall now show in some detail how Lederer and Burdick have bungled the task they set out to accomplish, and thereby struck a heavy blow at the cause which their book claims to serve. I will consider myself as having been successful if I can satisfy the reader that the following statements are true: Lederer and Burdick are shockingly ignorant of the facts essential for a fair presentation of their subject; they distort, through boundless exaggeration, the truth in respect to conditions that justify some of their criticism; they falsify vital aspects of reality through omission; and they constantly twist the meanings of facts and events through their failure to comprehend either the irreducible complexity of international relations or the difficulties, novel and perplexing, that are inherent in the policy of foreign aid.

Let any reader who suspects that I am now myself guilty of exaggeration examine the so-called Factual Epilogue with which Lederer and Burdick conclude their book. These fifteen pages, the authors reiterate, were written in order to prove that what they present in the form of fiction is not "wholly imaginary" but "based on fact"; and they promise that these pages contain not only their reasons for writing *The Ugly American* but also the sources from which their complaints and accusations are derived.

As to the reasons, the reader will have no trouble finding them, and may easily find them also praiseworthy, even if most are far from sound. But I challenge every single person who has publicly praised the factual accuracy of this book to show me where in the entire epilogue he has discovered anything resembling a *source,* let alone one that could pass as proof for the many specific accusations that Lederer and Burdick make against our aid programs in Southeast Asia. A quotation from the *New York Times,* and an excerpt from a speech by Secretary of State Dulles are about all that could be called sources. Both passages are concerned with the well-known fact that our Foreign Service is deficient in the knowledge of foreign languages, and both, incidentally, disprove Lederer's and Burdick's contention that our leaders are unaware of and unworried by this deplorable fact.[14] The Factual

[14] Lederer and Burdick quote Dulles as saying: "Interpreters are no substitute. It is not possible to understand what is in the minds of other people without understanding their language, and without understanding their language it is impossible to be sure that they understand what is in our minds." . . . The quotation from the

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Epilogue is merely a restatement, in non-fictional terms, of the authors' disparaging opinions, without even as much as a reference to the many serious books and documents on foreign aid that might have helped them to substantiate some of their less flagrant assertions.[15]

In pressing this point, I am not at all concerned with the question whether the characters of the book, such as the "ugly" American Homer Atkins, Father Finian, Colonel Hillendale, the Ambassadors Sears and McWhite, Senator Brown, or any other of its many improbable figures, are really "drawn from life." It would be as unfair to ask the authors to give us their "sources" for these characters as it is unseemly for them to indicate that they possess them but do not wish to reveal them. Nor do I want to raise the question of sources in regard to the several fictional letters by foreign service officers contained in *The Ugly American,* including the cablegram in which the Secretary of State himself replies to Gilbert McWhite's curious ultimatum for a reform of the American diplomatic service. They are fiction, and any claim for them to have a basis in fact is too ludicrous to be made the object of a political discussion. However, the failure to produce sources, or any sort of proof, becomes a serious matter as soon as we are dealing with the many claims and accusations that Lederer and Burdick make in discussing the contents of our programs of foreign aid.

FOREIGN AID is a subject about which nothing at all can be proved by advancing forceful opinions. Whatever statements are made about the successes or failures of American overseas operations in the field of technical assistance and economic aid can be substantiated only

New York Times consists of a few figures from an article by James Reston, of March 18, 1958, deploring the language deficiency of our foreign service personnel. All of this is self-evident but also one-sided. A man, experienced in training foreign service officials, points out the other side: "Other things being equal, it is far better for an American overseas to know the language of the people with whom he deals. But other things never are equal. There are too many examples of fluent linguists failing to communicate and too many cases of those who murder the language or depend entirely on interpreters somehow 'getting across,' to permit us to consider language proficiency as *the* central factor in success abroad." (John W. Marland, in *The Art of Overseasmanship,* ed. by Harlan Cleveland and Gerard J. Mangone, Syracuse University Press.) ... The Russians, whose bureaucratic regime favors all kinds of misconduct in appointments to official positions, are far from being as perfect in respect to the knowledge of foreign languages as *The Ugly American* describes them. A friend of mine had the following experience at the Soviet Consulate in Paris: An official in charge of visa affairs, whose knowledge of English proved to be nil (although he deals with American and British applicants), answered the question whether he spoke French, by pointing emphatically at his own chest and exclaiming indignantly: "Russe!"

[15] There is a great deal of factual information on American aid to Southeast Asia in *Transition and Tension in Southeast Asia,* by Nathaniel Peffer, (no publisher given), and on the problems of aid to the underdeveloped regions of the world in *Underdeveloped Areas,* A Book of Readings and Research, edited by Lyle W. Shannon, Harper & Brothers, 1957. Still more important for an informed criticism of American foreign aid policies and operations are the reports of the special study missions of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, and the published Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Foreign Economic Policy.

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by producing accurate figures and reliable dates, by citing specific projects and correct names of places, by relating verifiable events, and by using many other relevant data, all of which are available to anyone who is willing to work through the growing bulk of official and private publications on the subject. *The Ugly American,* I am sorry to say, shows no evidence that Lederer and Burdick have bothered to improve upon their scant and one-sided information through a study of the existing sources. The facts of this book are all of the kind one gathers in travel and conversations. They are indeed only more or less reliable impressions, selected by two minds whose polemical determination made it apparently impossible for them to absorb anything contrary to their own strong views.

A good example of the manner in which Lederer and Burdick proceed when they discharge their obligation of supplying the reader with facts can be found in the Factual Epilogue on page 281. It occurs in connection with the authors' attempt to explain what factual conditions they meant to dramatize with their story of Tom Knox, the fictional chicken expert in Indochina, whom the French, for quite unaccountable reasons, take such trouble to corrupt. This story, incidentally, describes conditions which, if they existed at all, existed five years ago. In this respect, the story of Tom Knox is typical for the entire book: Neither the events chosen by Lederer and Burdick to illustrate their points nor the facts that are supposed to prove them are of much validity for a description of conditions as they exist today.

With the story of Tom Knox, the authors explain, "we tried to point out the fact that we spend billions on the wrong aid projects while overlooking the almost costless and far more helpful ones." And they continue: "Most American technicians abroad are involved in the planning and execution of 'big' projects: dams, highways, irrigation systems."

I cannot but urge the reader to impress upon his mind the full meaning of these two sentences. A brief analysis will reveal that they contain, in addition to an expression of opinion—that small projects are "far more helpful" than big ones—two categorical statements: that "billions" are being spent on the "wrong" aid projects, and that most American technicians abroad are involved in the building of dams, highways, and irrigation systems.

Concerning the widespread opinion that small projects are preferable to big ones, all I want to say at this point is that Lederer and Burdick might at least have given us a few of the reasons why most experts on foreign aid for Asia are unwilling to support this notion. However, the authors' assertion about the billions we spend (the usual word is "waste") on wrong projects calls for as close an examination as the available documentary evidence permits. Even if we take into account the existing diversity of opinion as to what makes a project good and what makes it "wrong," this statement is the most serious accusation that can be made against our programs of foreign aid. Do Lederer and Burdick give any proof in support of this accusation? None what-

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soever! They name no project, refer to no country, give no figures, and do not even bother to mention the several books and many articles whose authors have tried to show that foreign aid is largely a waste of American money.[16] All we get as evidence that billions are spent on the wrong kind of projects is another expression of opinion. And it is contained in the equally undocumented statement about our alleged preference for big projects.

THOUGH NEGLECTING to produce one single fact or source, our authors are quite eloquent in explaining why a project is worthwhile only if it is small. They even give us a list of the projects they regard as most helpful, and in support of their views they also make reference to "native economists" from whom they claim to have gathered their information, but again without mentioning so much as a single name, country, book, paper or other verifiable source. According to this list, what we must give to and teach the Asian peoples in order that Communism "can lose its appeal" is improvement of chicken and pig breeding, small pumps, knowledge of commercial fishing, canning of food, improvement of seeds, small village-size papermaking plants, sanitary use of night-soil, and the development of small industries. Such projects "would not only make friends, while costing little, but are also prerequisite to industrialization and economic independence for Asia."

I do not know what "village-size papermaking plants" are, and I doubt very much that the creation of small industries falls under the category of small and "almost costless" aid projects. But apart from these reservations, I am willing to concede the usefulness of the small projects proposed by Lederer and Budick. However, there is an important point to be made here. In fact, for the benefit of readers who believe that these authors have taught them something about the kind of aid America is giving to the countries of Southeast Asia, I am going to make the question of small and big projects the main point of my demonstration that *The Ugly American* is untrue to fact. Surely, there must be many people who after reading this book will be tempted, by curiosity or from disbelief, to undertake a closer study of this intricate subject. These I must warn to get ready for a surprise. Whatever real documentary evidence they happen to put their hands on, they will inevitably learn that our aid programs in Southeast Asia consist mainly of the type of projects that Lederer and Burdick have chosen to advocate with such uninformed zeal.

I naturally expect no one who admired the "factual accuracy" of *The Ugly American* to accept this statement without the documentary evidence that Lederer and Burdick neglected to supply, and I wish I could arouse in everyone who reads this book a desire to examine

[16] One is *The Great Give-away*, by Eugene W. Castle, Regnery, 1957. It is an intemperate attack on foreign aid; another is *Foreign Aid Reexamined, A Critical Appraisal*, edited by James W. Wiggins and Helmut Schoeck, Public Affairs Press, Washington, D.C., 1958.

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the available sources on foreign aid. I suggest that those who are willing to embark on a study of foreign aid avoid for the beginning the many books and documents written in defense of the ongoing operations. They may also ignore the many authors, both American and Asian, who believe that big projects like dams, highways, and irrigation systems are more important as a "prerequisite to industrialization and economic independence for Asia" than the improvement of chicken breeding and the sanitary use of night-soil. (The Russians, whom Lederer and Burdick never tire of holding up to us as shining examples, certainly act quite contrary to *The Ugly American*'s dogmatic prescriptions.) Let readers who want to know "facts" start out with the *Report on Overseas Operations of the United States Government* submitted to the Senate by the Hon. J. Ellender, United States Senator from the State of Louisiana (Senate Document No. 31). Anyone unfamiliar with this Senator's record of opposition to the larger part of American overseas operations needs only to read the Introductory Note to this document (where the Senator speaks of "the utter waste inherent in this program") to be assured that Ellender cannot possibly be the model for Jonathan Brown, the Senator whom Lederer and Burdick invented to show that even our sharpest Congressional investigators are fooled by our officials abroad. The Senator from Louisiana has in my opinion made numerous errors of judgment, but to claim that our aid officials succeeded in reducing his critical ardor is like saying that the late Senator Joseph McCarthy deplored our preoccupation with Communist infiltrators and spies. Ellender even shares Lederer's and Burdick's opinion about the value of small projects, opposing big ones, however, chiefly because they cost more money and impede his real aim, which is an early termination of most programs of foreign aid. But we are here not concerned with the relative *merits* of small and big projects. (Neither the premises nor the data of Senator Ellender's report, let alone those of Lederer and Burdick, are adequate for a serious discussion of this complex subject.) We are concerned with the question what kind of projects—whether big or small—our aid officials actually promote. I am proposing a study of Senator Ellender's report because this unique accumulation of facts and figures shows better than any other document I know what is really being done with the money we are spending for foreign aid. Consequently, no other official or private publication is more apt to reveal how shockingly ignorant Lederer and Burdick are of the kind of aid America is extending to the countries of Southeast Asia; nor can any other publication demonstrate more convincingly that their undocumented facts are as unrelated to American overseas operations as are the characters of their stories to real life.

II

Even a cursory examination of the Ellender report will disabuse anyone who suspects that this judgment might be too harsh.

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In order to spare the reader too many figures and lists of projects in actual operations, I shall limit myself to four countries. Two I chose because of the large volume of aid they receive. They are Thailand and Vietnam. The other two—Laos and Indonesia—I propose to examine because Lederer and Burdick mention them as examples of countries were Communism is being helped by wrong projects of American aid. The facts and figures covering all American economic and technical assistance projects undertaken in these countries before the end of fiscal year 1956/57 can be looked up in the Ellender report, pp. 345–428 for Thailand, pp. 286–328 for Vietnam, pp. 376–385 for Laos, and pp. 53–87 for Indonesia.

To begin with Thailand, the reader with enough patience will find that page 420 lists, under eight headings, a total of seventy-eight projects. How many are "big," how many are "small"? It is true that a given sum of money is not the only indicator for the size of a project, but a project for a country of 20 million people costing less than one million dollars in six years can hardly be called big. Of the seventy-eight projects listed for Thailand, sixty-four fall into this class. Of these sixty-four, twenty-three cost less than $100,000, twelve less than 50,000, and five less than $10,000. And they are almost without exception projects of the kind that prove that our aid officials did not have to read *The Ugly American* to devote some effort and spend some money on the improvement of chickens, the raising of better pigs, the development of improved seeds, and the spreading of knowledge about commercial fishing. Take for instance what American aid has done for Thailand's fishing industry. We built 4,000 small private fishponds and an adequate number of fish hatcheries; we improved the country's main fish marketing facilities; and we raised the quality of dried, smoked and salted fish. American aid thus supplied Thailand, at little expense, with an immense source of low-cost food both for domestic use and export. In the field of agriculture, more than 1,000 types of rice have been tested to find out which ones are best suited for the different rice areas of the country. In addition to supplying the Thai people with better breeds of poultry, hogs and cattle, our aid technicians have helped them to improve soil fertility, resettle fallow land, make better use of available fertilizers, fight rinderpest, obtain sanitary water and protect their forests. And they continue to teach them, through a dozen other small projects in agriculture and community development, how modern methods can both preserve and put to better use the existing resources of the country. Wells, and pumps too, have been supplied to numerous Thai villages through this many-sided program about which even in Senator Ellender's fault-finding survey an occasional laudatory remark can be found. In regard to the costly efforts made by our administration in the field of health and sanitation, the Senator admits that this program "was well worth the money it involved. It has produced concrete results in a comparatively short time. It has done what our mutual security aid

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should do, that is, improve the way of life of present citizens, not future generations."[17]

THE CRITICAL VIEWS that Lederer and Burdick advance about our aid to Southeast Asia remain also unsupported after an examination of the fourteen "big" projects listed for Thailand, projects of which only one—irrigation and land reclamation—cost as much as three million dollars over a period of six years. Only three of the "big" projects are in the field of transportation. The costliest of these—highway development—required a total U.S. contribution of less than two million dollars by the end of 1956, largely for roads, as our aid officials assure us, of the farm-to-market type. This hardly justifies Lederer's and Burdick's statement (unsubstantiated like all others) that "we pay for huge highways through jungles in Asian lands where there is no transport except by bicycle and on foot." What disrespect for the intelligence of Asian leaders and American aid officials one single such sentence reveals! These men not only know better, they also are better than *The Ugly American* depicts them; and even if they were not, Lederer's and Burdick's loose phrase about "huge highways through jungles" would still make no sense. Nothing "huge" resembling a highway can be built with two million dollars in six years, nor with the larger amounts we have been spending in 1957 and 1958 to help Thailand develop the roads she needs as one of the indispensable conditions of economic progress.

The reader who has heard that we are now supporting the construction of a costly highway in Thailand only for military reasons should be glad to learn that this particular project can be justified very well on purely economic grounds. "The semiarid northeast of Thailand to be served by this road is relatively isolated, economically depressed, and vulnerable to subversion. The road forms a main link in the vital transportation route from the port of Bangkok to landlocked Laos. The linking of Bangkok to the northeast with an all-weather road is of very high priority in the improvement of Thailand's communications. Already a remarkable new economic activity is resulting as the road penetrates into the heretofore underdeveloped northeast. Agricultural diversification and processing is essential to the development of economic self-sufficiency in Thailand and the northeast is the key area in this regard."[18]

The other "big" projects in Thailand (all except one—malaria control—also costing less than two million dollars each) are in the fields of education (teacher training, technical and medical education), health, sanitation and agriculture. The three costliest among these are malaria control, which has already reached two thirds of the population, the construction of small hospitals in the 71 provinces, and crop improvement. Only two of the "big" projects are concerned with industry and

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17 "Ellender Report" (Senate Document No. 31), p. 390.

18 International Cooperation Administration Replies to Criticisms of the Foreign Aid Program, p. 23, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington: 1958.

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mining, but in these fields too, the number of small projects is remarkably large. One of these, the training of Thai technicians for small industries, fulfills the conditions of being "almost costless" and "prerequisite to industrialization" to such a degree that one wonders how Lederer and Burdick could have missed it if they had searched for the relevant facts.

As to the existing *need* for, and the *merits* of, large projects for Thailand, the reader would do well to look up what Clement Johnson, a keen student and sober critic of our Southeast Asia aid program, has to say on this subject, "With Thailand's untapped resources," he writes in his *Southeast Asia, U.S. Foreign Assistance Programs,* "she can be made fully self-sustaining, richer and economically stronger, and hence a more powerful and valuable ally, with the proper help." There is no doubt in Johnson's mind that the "proper help" requires, in addition to the many small projects we operate in Thailand, many more big ones. This is why Clement Johnson does not blame our aid officials in Thailand for urging the construction of a multi-purpose dam on the Chao Phraya river, which would add 5 to 7 million acres to the existing rice land, provide the country with badly needed flood control and water conservation, and give Thailand her first major power plant. Lederer and Burdick would have done well to ponder a remark Clement Johnson made about the need for roads. Adequate, good roads, he says, are a condition for Thailand to "quicken business life beyond present concepts." This is the opinion of a man whose main concern in writing his report was to show that a business-like approach to the problems of foreign aid is quite compatible with the political aims we are trying to pursue in Southeast Asia.[19]

III

As to South Vietnam, a country about which our loquacious authors are remarkably reticent, no lengthy argument is needed to show that here is a case in which not a single one of *The Ugly American*'s heedless generalizations applies. Some recurrent prophecies of disaster

[19] Projects undertaken for military reasons are as a rule executed in such a manner as to be of immediate economic benefit to the countries. Another example to prove this is an official communication from Saigon, read at the Conference of the American Friends of Vietnam on April 17, 1959 in Washington, D.C., by Major General Samuel L. Myers, former Deputy Chief, USMAAG, Vietnam. It seems that in 1958 alone the army engineers "began projects calling for construction of more than 154 miles of road, 5 major bridges and 98 minor bridges and 2 airfields. While all this construction is required for military purposes, at the same time it is opening up new areas to resettlement and cultivation which have heretofore been beyond reach because of the impenetrable forests and jungles. Nearly all of the construction mentioned above will have been completed by mid-1959. In addition, the engineers are digging wells, supervising the construction of cantonments and barracks, etc...." Through these construction projects, civilian building skills are developed and substantial contributions are being made to the economic development of the area where troops are stationed. The Vietnamese think that about 75% of the army engineers are engaged in a type of military work that contributes directly to the economic development of Vietnam.

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notwithstanding, there is in Vietnam no "rising tide of anti-Americanism." The Communist party, although in control in North Vietnam, has not become a "strong contender for power" in the South, but has rather lost all hope of a victory which five years ago not even our most consistent optimists had the courage to doubt. After having grown to almost irresistible strength under the colonial regime, Vietnamese Communism suffered a most disastrous defeat between 1954 and 1956, the first inflicted by its enemies on Communism in Asia with entirely political weapons. Far from being a country where "the Russians will win without firing a shot," Vietnam, on the contrary, is the first country in Asia where the West, by replacing imperialism with policies of aid, has *stopped* the "Russians" without firing a shot.

In view of this momentous historical result, it would be ridiculous to belabor the question (which no one will ever be able to decide) whether the obvious benefits derived by the West from our aid to Vietnam are more the effect of the many small or the few big projects we have been supporting in this important Southeast Asian country. The fact remains that in Vietnam, too, our aid administrators and technicians have been doing what Lederer and Burdick demand, long before *The Ugly American* was written, and have done it with results for which even the most caustic detractor of our aid programs should be able to spare a few words of praise. Even as critical an observer of American aid and Vietnamese politics as the English journalist David Hotham cannot but use words of praise in listing what American aid has done for Vietnam, in an article criticizing this aid. "The American aid program in South Vietnam," he writes, "has dealt with amazing, indeed unique, efficiency with the refugees. It has kept the economy going. It has largely prevented inflation. It has kept a strong and reasonably competent anti-Communist government in power, and ended the previous anarchy. It is carrying out many works, both material and spiritual, that will clearly be of enduring importance to Vietnam in years to come."[20]

With two important exceptions—repair of the war-damaged transportation system and refugee resettlement—the Vietnamese technical assistance and economic aid program is quite similar to the one we operate in Thailand, although, because of the effect of the long Indochina war, large and costly rehabilitation efforts reduced the proportion of money available for smaller projects. This makes it the more remarkable that of the sixty-five projects in Vietnam described on pp. 292–328 of the Ellender report for the years 1954–56, at least fifty must be called small by whatever standard one chooses to apply.[21] Neither the improvement of chickens nor the raising and marketing of fish is miss-

[20] *The Reporter,* September 19, 1957.

[21] Representative Walter Judd, who was a member of one of our frequent Congressional Investigation Missions in Asia, said in a speech in Congress on June 6, 1956, that he had found our aid officials in Vietnam "working hard and selflessly on 89 different projects. When we suggested that we might be spreading ourselves a little thin, one said: 'But it's much better than it was—we did have 240.' "

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ing in this meticulous description of technical and administrative achievements; and if I am not misreading a paragraph on a project entitled "disposal of waste," our aid experts in Vietnam concerned themselves already years ago with the use of night-soil, without, however, claiming thereby to have discovered an especially effective means of breaking the Communist tide.

The careful reader of the Ellender report will notice that we have in Vietnam an "excessive" number of costly projects for health and education. This will surprise no one who has ever realized how shamefully negligent the colonial regime has been in these two fields. I find good reason to rejoice over the fact that the dollars that go to Indochina are no longer spent on French airplanes and tanks but are now used to increase the number of Vietnamese doctors, nurses, technicians, administrators, teachers, and schools.

Unfortunately, no American money is as yet being spent on one really big Vietnamese project: a great dam that has been under discussion for more than four years. Our experts rejected the project as too big and too costly, while the "native economists," apparently unconsulted by Lederer and Burdick, insist that without this dam or a similar source of electric power, South Vietnam will never be able to keep pace with the economic progress that is being made in the Chinese- and Russian-supported Communist North.

RECENT REPORTS have removed all doubts as to the reality and the scope of the aid North Vietnam is receiving from Russia and Communist China. In February, a new agreement was signed in Peiping according to which North Vietnam will receive aid from Communist China equivalent to $168,775,000. A *New York Times* report from Hongkong of February 18, 1959, says that the money "will be used for forty-nine industrial and communications enterprises in North Vietnam, including new iron and steel plants, coal mines, ship-yards, nitrogen fertilizer plants, electric power stations, railways, textile mills and a paper mill."

The efforts Russia and Communist China are making to speed the economic development of North Vietnam are tremendous. Last year, in a dispatch from Hongkong, dated April 12, 1958, the *New York Times* reported that a "machine-tool plant covering fourteen acres was dedicated at Hanoi. The plant was equipped with machinery supplied by the Soviet Union under an aid agreement with Communist North Vietnam. A Hanoi radio report said that it was the first modern machine-tool-making factory in North Vietnam. A Soviet expert said it was equipped with the latest machines and 'ranked with the most modern engineering works in the world.'" There is no doubt that these efforts are made in a spirit of competition with American aid to South Vietnam. For these reasons, I would like to compare the Sino-Soviet aid program for North Vietnam with our aid to the South, apart from the question to what extent the aid policy of the Soviet bloc is likely to influence the future of our own programs of foreign aid. Such

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a comparison shows that the aid North Vietnam receives is destined almost exclusively for the kind of big projects that Lederer and Burdick so strongly condemn—at least if they are American-sponsored. Ever since 1955, the bulk of Sino-Soviet aid to North Vietnam went into railways, highways, irrigation systems, harbors, river transportation and industry, to such an extent that a well-known European observer predicted two years ago what the outcome of the race between Communist and American aid for Vietnam would be: "No matter what unknown price North Vietnam is paying or will have to pay for that assistance, one thing seems obvious: within a few years, at the present pace, a semi-industrialized North Vietnam will emerge beside an agricultural South.[22] The same author reports that the total in aid promised to North Vietnam in 1955 was 2 billion dollars. This means that actual deliveries will soon exceed American aid to the South, and, more important still, that the leaders of the North, unlike our allies in the South, were assured of support for their economic development projects for at least ten years. American aid depends, from one year to the other, on whether Congress continues to approve the Administration's Mutual Security Program.

I shall not discuss here the question whether American aid, as some critics maintain, should have done more to give South Vietnam some of the industries she undoubtedly must get sooner or later, regardless of whether North Vietnam is industrialized quickly or slowly; this complex question is related to fundamental concepts of American economic and political thinking, and to deal with it properly requires that we find out whether some of these concepts are not an obstacle to an effective policy of foreign aid. At this point, I believe it to be more useful to say a few words about the respective merits of small and big projects in regard to Vietnam. This may give us an answer to the question what kind of aid is most likely to reduce a country's future need of aid.

The parts of Vietnam where American aid goes only into very small projects are the so-called Center provinces. (The one exception is the settlement project for the high plateau.) The reasons are obvious: these provinces have little potential for economic development. They are largely mountainous and infertile, and not blessed with minerals or any other kind of natural wealth. Aid projects, therefore, are practicable only in the field of agriculture and community development. Abandoned land is recultivated, small canals and other irrigation works are repaired, roads are built between villages and towns, and crops as well as livestock are improved by the simple and inexpensive means of proper technical assistance. The result is a slow but steady increase in the output of most local crops, above all rice, but also of vegetables, fruits, coffee and tea. In rice, these efforts will soon make the center of Vietnam self-supporting, for the first time in about two hundred years. For the benefit of readers who have recently heard that prominent Americans requested that the aided countries be required to contribute

22 Tibor Mendes, in *Le Figaro*, April 6, 1957.

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to the American-financed aid projects, I would like to add that the cost of these efforts is largely carried by the Vietnamese themselves, on a provincial and even a village scale. On the local level, these activities are a joy to watch for anyone who has seen the stagnation that characterized the life of these regions in 1954. Here the visitor will find plenty of villages supplied with small pumps, doing precisely what the pumps are doing that Homer Atkins supposedly invented for "mountainous" Sarkhan, the imaginary country of *The Ugly American.* During my last visit to Vietnam in summer 1958, I also observed the enthusiasm with which the officials, both American and Vietnamese, promote the installation of these pumps, often over the resistance of the older peasants, who remain sceptical toward new techniques even after they have been proven superior to the old ones.

BUT ALTHOUGH the new rice fields and orchards, the small roads and local irrigation systems in the Center provinces of Vietnam proved to me that our aid can give life and prosperity to a war-ravaged country, I could not forget for a moment that the total of these cheering efforts, assuming that they will all bear fruit, does little to make Vietnam "economically independent." The people engaged in them will live better and happier lives, but "economic independence" for Vietnam requires more. Even an economist who tried to make South Vietnam prosperous by developing only her vast resources for agriculture would get nowhere without a great number of new projects as big as any we have undertaken so far.

In order to produce the quantity of rice necessary for Vietnam's "economic independence," the vast regions of available cultivable land in the South have to be opened up. This can be done only through many big projects. Through the costly refugee program, one such project was realized with universally acclaimed success. Because Lederer and Burdick, in their Factual Epilogue, try to lean on the authority of Leland Barrows, the former Director of the U.S. Operations Mission to Vietnam, I shall quote Barrows on one of the big projects he was able to realize, thanks to sufficient American aid and sustained Vietnamese enthusiasm. "In resettling refugees, much is being done to develop the economic wealth of Vietnam. You all know the miracle of Cai San, where in a little more than six months 43,000 refugees have been resettled in more than 8,000 newly built houses on 200 kilometers of newly dug canals, where despite the handicap of early rains, the first year's crop of 16,000 hectares of rice is growing. Less well known are such upland communities as Gia Kiem, La Lagna and Ban Methout, or such seacoast towns as Ba Ngoi and Ba Lang. Perhaps most encouraging of all is the way refugee diligence and American refugee aid are being used to open new communities in the hitherto unpopulated and unexploited new lands of the high plateau. When everything is taken into account—the political and spiritual victory represented by the sacrifice the refugees made in moving into Free Vietnam, the great resource of human skill they represent, and the idle and un-

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productive land they can with appropriate assistance make fruitful—I can think of no better way to have used American aid for the economic development of this country than in support and resettlement of refugees. If, as I confidently expect, the refugee resettlement effort is successfully completed this year with the funds now available, Free Vietnam will have achieved a success without parallel and will have added fundamentally to its economic well-being in the process."[23]

The total rice acreage in South Vietnam was 5,250,000 between 1935 and 1939. During the Indochina war it went down to three million by 1949, but rose again to approximately 3½ million at the end of the war, in 1954. The efforts of the Vietnamese government, through which hunger has been eliminated in South Vietnam, have raised the total rice acreage in 1956 and 1957 to well over 4,500,000. But many more large irrigation projects are necessary to bring it back to over 5,000,000. Exports, which totalled only 200,000 tons of rice in 1957 could be raised to 1 million tons. Such exports would bring into Vietnam, at present rice prices, 150 million dollars in foreign currency. It is not unreasonable to expect that with sufficient aid for the next few years, Vietnam could achieve this goal rapidly, and that as a consequence the amount of aid to Vietnam could be reduced substantially in the near future—a prospect that should persuade even the newly-formed "Citizens Committee on Foreign Aid" to oppose any cut in the aid we are now giving to Vietnam.

IV

Among the countries where the Communist parties have become "strong contenders for power," *The Ugly American* mentions Laos and Indonesia, in a context suggesting that these are two more examples for the way Communism is being promoted by the wrong kind of American aid. We know that Lederer and Burdick consistently identify the wrong kind of aid with the "big" projects for which we allegedly spend billions of dollars, and which "are neither needed nor wanted except by a few local politicians who see such projects as a means to power and wealth." But if small projects "make friends," and big ones tend to be harmful, the very insignificance of our aid to Indonesia should rule out any adverse political effect. According to the Ellender report, the "total of actual expenditures in Indonesia by the United States during the 1956 fiscal year aggregated $6.3 million" (p. 54), an amount with which even the ingenious "ugly" American Homer Atkins (assuming he would bother with anything bigger than a bicycle or a small pump) could build no dams, highways or irrigation projects. Between 1951 and 1956, United States dollar contributions to Indonesia have totaled $41.7 million.[24] This is just above what we spent at home

[23] From a speech given to the Vietnamese-American Association in Saigon, on October 9, 1956.

[24] Indonesia received an Export-Import Bank loan of $100 million in 1950. At the time of Senator Ellender's last visit, it had also accumulated some $50 million from sales of surplus agricultural products received under Public Law 480.

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for the construction of an unfinished battleship that was already obsolete when it was commissioned, and that was recently sold (with no one in Congress complaining about mismanagement or waste) for $1.5 million. American aid for Indonesia, the largest and most troubled country of Southeast Asia, amounts to an annual gift of less than ten cents for every one of its eighty million inhabitants, a sum hardly sufficient (if money were a decisive factor) to influence a wavering Indonesian in making a choice between Communism and the democratic West.

BECAUSE OF THEIR FEAR of discussing the troublesome question of our military assistance programs to non-Communist nations, Lederer and Burdick have missed their only chance to build up some sort of a case against the volume, the type and the administration of our aid to at least one Southeast Asian country. If they were serious critics they could probably have shown that our relatively large program of military and economic aid to Laos is quite vulnerable, both in respect to size and purpose, and that the many people who have voiced concern over the administration of our Laotian program have probably not spoken without good cause. But from *The Ugly American*'s premises, not even our aid to Laos can be attacked with any hope of convincing an audience not basically hostile to foreign aid. Almost every kind of small project demanded by Lederer and Burdick has been introduced by our aid officials and technicians into Laos, at such low cost that even the Senator from Louisiana fails in his efforts to find fault with most projects in operation during 1956. For village improvement, we spent $35,000, for livestock improvement $59,000. The sum of $26,000 was allocated for first aid kits, a total of $24,000 for malaria control, and no more than $13,500 to promote inland fish culture. But all of this was eclipsed by the gratifyingly low sum of $6,000 for Lederer's and Burdick's pet project, the improvement of chickens. If there is any logic at all in *The Ugly American*'s political reasoning—which says that "almost costless" projects are the best way for America to make friends in Asia—Communism can have no real chance in Laos.

I know, of course, as well as the reader that these figures and verifications of projects prove nothing one way or another about the quality and relevancy of our various programs of aid to Laos, but I must insist that they effectively destroy the bases from which Lederer and Burdick attack American foreign aid. It takes more than a study of the Ellender report to make factually sound and politically meaningful statements about the intricate question of aid to Laos. Laos is both poor and strategically important for the defense of Southeast Asia against a Chinese-supported Communist attack. One glance at the map will show that to save Laos from Communism is worth some effort, and if money is needed to save it, some money will have to be spent. The country could hardly exist, and could certainly not remain outside the Communist sphere of influence, without a substantial amount of American aid. But how much and what kind of aid

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would serve our mutual interests best I do not feel qualified to say. I am not even ready to decide whether the accusations that have been raised against both the American and the local administrators of our aid projects in Laos are as well-founded as the multiplicity of reports leads one to believe.[25] Some recent measures against waste and corruption indicate that they were at least partly based on fact. To mention an even more difficult problem: I have long been inclined to believe that our costly program of military aid to Laos can be justified only on the basis of rather fantastic political and military conjectures. However, to admit one's insufficiency of knowledge and to use caution when one is asked to judge the merits of a particular aid program does not mean that one knows nothing and has no opinion at all. I would favor economic and technical assistance to Laos even if I knew only this: that American aid will soon have produced ten times more Laotian physicians, teachers and technicians than the colonial regime produced in the sixty years during which it exercised its "civilizing mission" over this part of former French Indochina. And I am also ready to support some measure of military aid to this strategically important country of only two million people, even if it were only because replacement of an American-financed Laotian army with one single American division, provided we could station it in Laos, would cost at least three times the amount of our present aid to Laos.

BUT WHILE I MIGHT somehow be able to decide what should be done about aid to Laos, I am quite at a loss to explain how Lederer and Burdick managed to reap praise for a book so full of contradictory statements and monstrous factual errors. As to contradictory statements, let me add one last example, which the reader will find in a reference to Egypt, a country Lederer and Burdick mention in the Factual Epilogue (together with Indonesia and Laos) as one where Communism is gaining in strength because we practice the wrong kind of aid. The wrong kind of aid, the reader will remember, is involvement in big projects, the most sinful of which apparently is the building of dams. But is it true that Communism has lately made progress in Egypt? The fact that the Communist party has been outlawed in Egypt, and Nasser's attack against his Communist-supported Arab opponents in Iraq, can scarcely be regarded as proof of Communist progress in Egypt. And is there a reliable way of measuring the effect American aid has on the fortunes of a particular Communist party? As Nasser approached Moscow only after we refused to finance the famous Aswan Dam, the Egyptian example would of course only prove—if it proves anything at all—that Communism is thriving not because we are building dams but

[25] See in particular *The Wall Street Journal*, April 9, 1958. A more balanced criticism of our aid program to Laos is Franklin J. Leerburger's article "Laos: Case Study of U.S. Foreign Aid," in Foreign Policy Bulletin, January 1959. See also the report on the hearings of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives of May 7 and 8, 1958.

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rather because we are *not*. But Egypt lies outside the territory with which *The Ugly American* is primarily concerned, and I mentioned it only to prepare the reader for a later portion of my essay, in which I shall try to show that Lederer's and Burdick's political thinking is about equal to the reliability of their facts.

Dams, however, whether they are of the kind we are building or have refused to build, are a big enough problem of American overseas operations to deserve the few lines that are necessary to refute what *The Ugly American* has to say on this subject. The reader will remember how emphatically Lederer and Burdick disapprove of the passion they ascribe to our aid officials and technicians for building highways and dams; the impression they create is that there is hardly a country receiving American aid where most of the money is not sacrificed to this megalomania of construction, and that this unfortunate concentration on big projects is the main cause for the political failure of our programs of foreign aid. This makes it the more remarkable that Lederer and Burdick do not give a single example to illustrate how useless and wasteful our efforts to build dams have been. As in the case of the highways through jungles where the only traffic is by bicycle and on foot, there is nothing concrete about the dams these authors condemn: not one is mentioned by name, no figures are given to show their exorbitant costs, no country is named in which one of these harmful projects is completed, under construction, or planned.

Even the reader who has long become aware of the singular meaning Lederer and Burdick give to the word "factual" must be startled by this reluctance to quote figures and names on projects whose very nature determines that there can be only a few. It is quite unlikely that Lederer and Burdick never heard of the two cases in which American money was used to help in the construction of a controversial multipurpose dam: the Helmand Valley project in Afghanistan, and the Karaj dam in Iran, two pet subjects of all critics who condemn foreign aid either on principle or because of "inefficiency and waste." Could it be that Lederer and Burdick really took a closer look at these two cases and then decided that they do not support their attack on the American aid program?

The Helmand Valley project is now widely regarded as a fail-construction, although a minority of experts still believe that the future may yet justify its enormous cost. But the critics who say that this project should never have been started stand on fairly solid ground. It is difficult to prove that it is as a result of this costly and doubtful venture that Afghanistan has turned toward Russia and become one of the largest recipients of Soviet aid. (One of the first Soviet- financed projects, incidentally, was a modern asphalt road through the capital of Afghanistan.) But there can be no doubt that the Helmand Valley project was poorly prepared: its costs were vastly underestimated, the land to be irrigated turned out to be largely unsuitable for decent crops, the population of these regions is apparently unwilling to give up their ancient nomadic way of life. Construction was carried out

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by an American firm. When the funds were exhausted long before the project was completed, the Export-Import Bank (whose policy critics of the aid administration habitually praise) granted a $40,000,000 loan, while several additional millions were spent by our aid mission to Afghanistan to remedy some of the project's most serious faults. But do these efforts to save an ill-conceived project justify the many critics who try again and again to put the blame for all that is wrong with the Helmand Valley on American aid? Even Senator Ellender, who misses no opportunity to show up our smallest failings and minces no words in castigating what he calls our "overambitious planners," feels obliged to contradict the people who use American aid to Afghanistan as proof that our aid does more harm than good. He writes: "We came into the picture long after the project was conceived and started. The mere fact that American engineers built the dams and that the Export-Import Bank furnished some of the money to continue the work does not brand the project as one undertaken by our government."[26]

IN REGARD TO THE KARAJ DAM in Iran, which Lederer and Burdick must have had in mind but decided not to mention, the story is different, but it is no more suitable to prove our aid officials to be dam-building maniacs than the story of the Helmand Valley. It is true that our aid mission in Iran proposed and supported the construction of this multipurpose dam, but no one has ever produced evidence in support of a *Reader's Digest* story according to which our aid administration forced this project on the reluctant Iranian officials who allegedly would have preferred a power station in Teheran.[27] When American support for this project was not forthcoming to the desired extent, the Iranians, far from dropping the project, decided to complete it with their own funds. In October 1957, the Iranian Seven Year Development Plan Organization signed a contract with Morrison-Knudsen International in the amount of about $41 million for completion of the Karaj dam and the construction of a power station. To provide a much-needed source of water supply for the rapidly growing capital was one of the reasons why our aid officials proposed and why the Iranians themselves are now proceeding with this project. In fact, the Iranians have recently quite on their own started another one of these "useless" dams (this time without being prodded by forward-looking American aid officials), for the simple reason that dams are as vital for Iran's economic development as railroads and steelmills were for the economic growth of the United States. This may explain why Senator Ellender, who is quite informed about the controversies

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26 Ellender Report, p. 21. Here again the Russians, whom Lederer and Burdick praise for their better techniques and programs, act quite contrary to our authors' recommendations: "In Afghanistan, a new asphalt road stretches through the main street of the capital city of Kabul. The road, financed by Soviet credits, was built by Afghan laborers with Soviet machinery, under the supervision of Soviet civil engineers." (Joseph S. Berliner, *Soviet Economic Aid*, p. 1.)

27 Van Rensselear, Bernard S., "How Not to Handle Foreign Aid," *Readers Digest*, February 1957.

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that have been raging over our Iranian aid program, is silent on the Karaj dam in his long report on Iran.[28]

I do not want to conclude these remarks without reference to another dam we did not build, the Da Nhim project in South Vietnam, the story of which should serve as a warning for people who base their firm general verdicts on a doubtful particular case. This dam, which the Vietnamese want, is not being built because our experts opposed it; they claim, I am sure for good reasons, that a power station near Saigon is at this stage of Vietnam's economic development a better way of providing the additional electricity of which the country is so badly in need. The Vietnamese concurred. But the prospects are poor that they will soon get the power station our experts and aid mission want them to have instead of the dam. This being a typical economic development project, South Vietnam has been trying to have it financed by the Development Loan Fund, which was created two years ago for precisely such purposes. Washington has so far been unable to comply with Saigon's request. Last year's appropriations for the Development Loan Fund have long been exhausted, and at this date, the administration has still not succeeded in extracting from Congress the $200,000,000 it requested months ago to keep the Fund in operation. This means not only that the urgent power project agreed upon for South Vietnam a year ago will probably not get started for another year. It also shows that the granting of a loan (for which Soviet bloc countries usually need a few weeks or sometimes only a few days) can take Washington a year or even longer.

Such are some of the realities of foreign aid. *The Ugly American* would be a less harmful book if it had also shown how Congress reduces the effectiveness of our aid programs, a matter of much greater consequence than the questionable "facts" this book offers on highways and dams.

V

What is true of Lederer's and Burdick's facts is, alas, also true of their figures. They are easier to check, and although wrong figures are rather common in print, their degree of reliability permits one to draw some conclusion about a book's accuracy in other respects. It is for this reason that I refer the reader who still believes that *The Ugly American* is "squarely based on fact" to page 28, where Lederer and Burdick say that "we do not need the horde of 1,500,000 Americans —mostly amateurs—who are now working for the United States overseas." The correct figure of American civilians working for our government abroad is 40,000. This includes the more than 22,000 American civilians working overseas for the Department of Defense. Of these 40,000 there are in the entire Far East less than 1,200 employed by the

[28] That there can be little economic progress in the Middle East without the construction of at least half a dozen major dams is shown convincingly by Eric Johnson, in an article in the *New York Times Magazine* of October 19, 1958, "A Key to the Future of the Mideast."

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agency charged with the administration of foreign aid (International Cooperation Administration–ICA). Approximately the same number is working under various ICA contracts (mostly with universities), and another 1,200 for the Department of State. By adding the 450 employed by our Overseas Information Service (USIA), we reach a total of approximately 4,000 Americans working for the United States Government in Asia, less than half of whom are stationed in Southeast Asia, the area of Lederer's and Burdick's confident display of misinformation and brash manufacture of political abuse. These 2,000 officials and technicians—a far cry from the "horde" of 1,500,000 (which is really the estimated yearly figure of Americans going abroad as tourists)—are made responsible by *The Ugly American* for the meager results of our aid efforts, and are denounced in advance as the chief culprits in the event of any future Communist victory in Southeast Asia.

Before I conclude this confrontation of some real sources on foreign aid with *The Ugly American*'s imaginary facts and figures, I would like to say a few words in defense of the people on whom Lederer and Burdick put the burden of guilt for our political "failures" in Southeast Asia. As in every field of human endeavor, the men and women who administer and execute our programs of foreign aid are of all kinds: some poor, some adequate, and some as excellent as training, devotion and years of experience have made many of our officials in all branches of public service. In the field of foreign aid, the obstacles for a rapid development of a competent staff of technicians and administrators are tremendous. Let us not forget that most of our Southeast Asian programs of foreign aid are less than eight years old. Of the experience our officials gathered through the administration of our various European aid programs little is applicable to Asia. Many Americans entered this new service with a firm desire to do more than an official's duty, but not everyone's original enthusiasm survived the wearisome task of learning anew, a task which our passion for publicly castigating our failures in this field does nothing to ease. After years of a daily call to ever inglorious action, with difficulties of private adjustment that not everybody bears equally well, there are bound to be many from whom all vitality has departed, and whose former zeal has been defeated by the accumulative boredom of necessary bureaucratic routine. But there are also other men who have grown keener, wiser, and more competent in years of bitter struggle unsung by our journalists and writers. Placed frequently between two governments adhering to different philosophies of social action, and always the first ones to receive the blame if either side is disappointed by the results of foreign aid, these men are in urgent need of some public recognition for their services to America and the community of free nations. To give them this recognition would seem one way of preserving for this vital field of American political endeavor the many first-rate administrators and technicians we now luckily possess.

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PART 3

I

It requires a close look at *The Ugly American*'s Epilogue to discover that the facts on which this fiction is based are either chimerical or conspicuously lacking; but even a superficial reading of some of their stories will reveal that Lederer and Burdick are richly endowed with ideas and opinions, many of them so ostentatiously original as to be quite devoid of sense.

If I now proceed to render some of these opinions and ideas from *The Ugly American*'s twenty fictional pieces into plain political language, the reader can be assured that I am doing this not with malice or from a desire to "entertain." The matter is much too embarrassing to serve for entertainment. How can anyone read without blushing for the authors (one of whom calls himself a political scientist), "that communism was the face of the devil, altered slyly and shrewdly, but still the devil's face, put on earth to test again the morality of men"?

This peculiar definition of Communism is given by Father Finian, one of the few heroes *The Ugly American* offers (kingsize, like many a recent American product). Finian, we learn, read all the important books on Communism from Marx to Stalin before he reached his politically original conclusion. "Others might think that Communism was the result of class conflict, of long-range economic change or political fanaticism," but Finian knew better, and Finian decided "to meet the test" (which meant to fight Communism in Asia), "even if he had to do it alone." (How Lederer and Burdick make Finian actually save a northern province of Burma from Communism I shall describe later—partly from an urge to remove the tag of political imbecility that *The Ugly American* has put on American Catholic priests working in the Far East.)

But before I attempt to show that Lederer and Burdick, in addition to making a mess of known facts, are also making a muddle of current American political ideas, I would like to explain a little further why I believe a refutation of this book to be a pressing political need. There are just too many people, even among my personal friends, who either approve of the book or at least maintain that any author attacking the shortcomings of America's Foreign Service and "wasteful" programs of foreign aid, no matter what faults his book may have, deserves to be commended.

THE PEOPLE WHO PRAISE *The Ugly American* although they have read it are not all of one mind. Some admit that the book is bad, but expect it to lead to at least a re-examination of our military aid programs for South Korea, Formosa, South Vietnam, Laos, and Pakis-

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tan, programs widely regarded as overexpanded. Others read *The Ugly American* as they would read an average thriller; they were unworried by its political improbabilities. But if the reviews are a reliable indication, the majority of the people who read *The Ugly American* must have a high opinion, if not of the literary value, at least of the political usefulness of this book. It is among these readers that I would like to achieve a few conversions to my views.

I believe the people who praise *The Ugly American* to be in error not on a matter of small importance, but rather on a subject more serious than any I can think of as a theme for a great American debate. War or peace, survival or annihilation, may depend on the skill with which we use, in Asia and elsewhere, the weapon of foreign aid in the pursuit of our political aims in the international arena. But unless we fulfill two conditions, both of greater importance than more foreign languages and fewer diplomatic cocktails (about which there is really no quarrel), we shall be as unsuccessful in the future as Lederer and Burdick say we have been in the past. The first of these conditions is that we realize that aid to other nations is not just a temporary device, or merely a weapon in the "cold war" that can be abandoned as soon as relations between East and West improve; foreign aid has become a permanent new instrument of international policy. To reduce our aid by 50 per cent of the current year and discontinue the entire program in three years, as a newly formed "Citizens Foreign Aid Committee" demands, would destroy all chances for the development of a constructive American policy. The second condition for success in foreign aid is for us to drop the illusion that there exists an unfailing way of knowing in advance what the best projects are for every country, and that our various aid programs are ever going to produce quick material results and gratifying moral rewards. No simple solution exists for the many problems that have arisen from our reluctant concern for, and mild supervision over, the regions we loosely call the Free World. Our leaders are also unlikely ever to achieve unanimity of opinion in regard to the aid we give, or refuse to give, to the so-called neutral or uncommitted nations; nor can they expect to win general popular support for our assistance programs to nations whose regimes resemble our democracy as the sword resembles the pen. All of this would be true even if we achieved perfect agreement, among ourselves and with the governments we aid, about the kind of projects, both in regard to purpose and size, that promise the best results. So the debate will continue, and will probably increase in bitterness, to the dismay of the many Americans for whom no political difficulty is without its just and workable solution, provided we practice common sense and apply a minimum of good will.

The truth is that American foreign aid faces tasks, and American foreign policy problems, which no amount of common sense and good will can solve, let alone solve in a short time and to everybody's satisfaction. This is hard to believe for people whose "practical" approach to politics tells them that better results for American diplomacy and

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foreign aid depend primarily on a better selection, a better training, and a greater devotion of the people we are sending abroad (as is undoubtedly the case with American performances in the fields of sports and music). No ambassadorial genius in languages and the other arts of diplomacy could have been successful with Vietnamese nationalists as long as his main task was to defend our policy of support for the French in Indochina. The success of American foreign policy in Asia depends primarily on the image we create of America in the minds of the Asian peoples, and on the effect upon them of America's basic political aims.

A complete disregard for this fundamental truth is one of the reasons why *The Ugly American* is a politically harmful book. "Listen, you damn fools," says the "ugly" American Homer Atkins to the bureaucrats, "it's a simple problem. Let us engineers solve it and come back with what we've been able to do... But don't bring up these goddam silly questions about politics and native psychology." As in most types of science-fiction, with which *The Ugly American* has much in common, it is the engineer and technician with an anti-political turn of mind who provide the solutions for all major problems. Instead of sharpening our awareness of the specifically political difficulties we are facing in Asia, Lederer and Burdick feed the pernicious conviction that our foreign policy problems are essentially problems of technical proficiency and individual devotion, implying that a successful solution of these problems depends entirely on us.

ASSUMING THAT LEDERER AND BURDICK were to be consulted on the present strained United States-Philippines relations, their diagnosis, if they take seriously what they preach, would have to be that there must be something wrong with our ambassador to Manila. According to this diagnosis, we would no longer be troubled by the Philippines' claim of about $900 million (including claims for war damages), by her requests for development loans (which the Garcia regime rightly feels are unduly delayed in Washington), by her attempts to charge higher import taxes on American goods and by the dispute over a revision of the United States bases agreement and criminal jurisdiction in cases involving American military personnel—if only we sent the right kind of ambassador to Manila and if this ambassador surrounded himself with the right kind of Tagalog-speaking assistants.

This remedy, of course, would have to ignore the revealing statements made by the Philippine Vice President, Diosdado Macapagal, in an interview on February 18, 1959 as quoted by the *New York Times*. Macapagal blamed his own government for most of the tensions presently existing between the two countries, accusing the Garcia regime of fostering anti-Americanism to divert attention from a graft-riddled administration; and he warned that the Garcia regime was fully capable of severing ties with the United States and of taking an independent, neutralist attitude in the East-West struggle. Here we have an example of the kind of problem our foreign policy faces all over Southeast Asia,

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problems whose causes cannot possibly be reduced to a lack of American diplomatic skills. Yet the only effective remedy, according to the Lederer and Burdick school of political thinking, would be the removal of an ambassador who evidently must be inefficient, ignorant and untrained, to have permitted such conditions to develop.

But it so happens that the United States ambassador to the Philippines is Charles F. Bohlen, a name that needs no introduction to admirers of highly competent and proficient career diplomats. Can he be held responsible for difficulties that are as much part of the growing-up processes of a recently independent and sorely troubled nation as they are of the delicate problems involving two national sovereignties? But that is precisely what follows from the premises on which the accusations, condemnations and recommendations of *The Ugly American* rest. It would indeed be foolish, if not reckless, to accept the easy-sounding remedies that these authors offer for the troubles we have in our relations with other countries. They are just another expression of the deep-rooted American conviction that no world problem exists that our skills in technology, manufacturing, and public relations are not able to solve.

The other side of this false coin is an unwillingness to see that deep dissensions, like grave errors, must also have deep causes. Stupidity or laxity on the part of an American ambassador is rarely the main cause of a particular American political failure, and a lack of training or devotion by our aid officials does not explain most instances of Asian dissatisfaction with American aid. But too many Americans are unfortunately still chasing after the elusive goal of quick and cheering solutions for baffling political problems.

It seems to me that this deep-rooted national disposition explains much of *The Ugly American*'s success. Our setbacks and adversities in Asia have confused and tired many Americans, and have dampened the public's enthusiasm with which it attended the inauguration of our programs of foreign aid. There is, of course, no dishonor in admitting perplexity in the face of permanently encountered obstacles; it can also not be disputed that we must incessantly strive to improve the ways of using the money we are spending on foreign aid. But these are only additional reasons why I oppose both *The Ugly American's* diagnosis of our diplomatic insufficiencies and its prescriptions for their cure.

II

As I am about to give a few examples that show what I mean by the political inanities of this book, I am addressing myself particularly to the many people who have openly endorsed *The Ugly American,* chiefly, I believe, because they expected it to arouse a livelier public interest in foreign policy and to contribute in some ways to the public's education on foreign aid. It is clear to me that they entered *The Ugly American*'s strange world of pseudo-fact and fiction quite unsuspectingly, that they went along with its highly questionable

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premises and fantastic conclusions as something acceptable only under the license granted to works of fiction, and that political considerations now make them treat as "fact" what they would undoubtedly have rejected had Lederer and Burdick offered it as an unadorned history or in a straight political report. I know, of course, that an effective political argument is not always factually sound or based on impeccable reasoning. But I believe that no one who is willing to read the following pages with an open mind will repeat his endorsement of this book with any sign of warmth.

Ask any admirer of *The Ugly American* to reread the story "Captain Boning, USN" and then let him tell you where in the real world of international politics the facts can be found, or reasons discovered, on which this preposterous tale is based. I am not speaking of minor fictional details, as for instance the fact that there never was a conference in Hongkong where we tried to persuade the "neutralist" countries of Asia to store American thermonuclear weapons, or that no "tough and competent" Jewish union "negotiator" ever headed an American diplomatic delegation at an international meeting devoted to military affairs. Even a slow-witted participant of the *New York Times* Youth Forum could tell you that our State Department is not in the habit of appointing "union negotiators" to head American diplomatic missions. Let us disregard the fictional trimmings of this story and examine the underlying notion which teaches us what Lederer and Burdick regard as the typical actors and aims of American foreign policy in Asia.

Salomon Asch, although as improbable a character as you will ever meet in fiction, is Lederer's and Burdick's hero of this story. The reader will be surprised to learn that he has none of the "training and professional experience" without which our officials, according to other pages of the book, are bound to offend the governments, and to misjudge the people, of the countries we are trying to befriend. Asch is the prototype of an American "boss," whose language and manners make him as fit for diplomacy as a hippopotamus for the role of a ballerina. The expression "nuts" in reply to his collaborators when he disagrees with anything they say sums up very neatly the major talent of this diplomatic genius, which consists in his ability to think of himself as superior to anybody around him, be he American or Asian. This giant of conceit regards all the other members of his delegation as "just average"; he condescends to call one "useful in spots," but makes up for it by describing another as being "not worth a damn," and a third as a "stupid jerk."

But all of this is unimportant for my argument. Salomon Asch was invented only for the purpose of showing that even a superman must fail if he has to work with people who are "not worth a damn," and to meet this crude product of Lederer's and Burdick's imagination is only our just reward for insisting on being "entertained" even while we are trying to find out how to save the world. The point of the story, without which I would not be able to make my own, concerns

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the unachieved purpose of this imaginary conference, and to a lesser degree the reason for its failure.

THE TASK OF THE AMERICAN DELEGATION, as I said before, was to persuade some of the "neutralist" Asian governments, in particular the government of India, to permit the storing of American thermonuclear weapons in their countries. In clear political language, this would have meant no less than a break with "neutralism" in favor of an open alignment with the West. This, we are told in all seriousness by Lederer and Burdick, Asch had almost accomplished, when history in the making was brutally arrested by a captain of the U.S. Navy, who caused India to remain in her "neutralist" rut. Toward the end of the conference, the Indian delegation was about to accept the hydrogen bombs offered by America (apparently behind the backs of Nehru and Krishna Menon); India failed to take this historic step because Captain Boning, the military specialist of the American delegation, was not on his toes. He had allowed himself to be seduced by a Chinese agent. After a number of pleasant but sleepless nights, and having lost his power of concentration, Captain Boning was caught napping and failed to give the required simple answer to a silly question asked by one of the unpredictable Indians: Was it safe for them to store these weapons in peace time; or was there any danger that they might explode in their faces?

This is how Lederer and Burdick describe the historical scene: "'Goddam the man,' Asch said to himself, 'this is the time when he should have snapped out the answer. They think the son of a bitch is trying to be evasive.'

"'A simple question, Captain Boning,' Asch said crisply. 'Give us the simplest answer.'

"'I think, sir, that substantial parts of that matter are classified and I cannot reveal them,' Boning said, but his voice lacked conviction."

That was the end. Lederer and Burdick try to explain why the great Asch, after finding out that the requested information was *not* classified, failed to save the situation: the Asian delegates were annoyed and too excited to listen to reason, and "Asch knew when he was licked." But I find this a very unsatisfactory explanation, and I feel that a word or two should be said in defense of Asch: within the world created by fiction to show off his greatness, his failure remains a mystery. The reader can solve it, however, by asking himself what chance of success Asch would have had in the world of fact. He would have failed, as would anyone else, if anyone had ever been charged with his hopeless assignment. There was never an Indian delegation that considered the acceptance of American thermonuclear weapons for storage in India, and if the Indians should ever change their minds they will get these weapons, no matter how many nights American captains spend in bed with pretty Chinese girls.

I can think of no better example to illustrate what I mean by the American desire to find simple explanations for complicated political

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facts. If the causes of our political failures abroad were as clear-cut and as plainly reducible to personal imperfection, it would indeed be easy to solve all the problems by which our diplomacy is plagued. How reassuring an aspect even our greatest political difficulties in Asia would suddenly take on! We would meet the challenge, and would in a passionate movement of national self-perfection soon produce all the requirements of unfailing diplomatic success. But, alas, Indian neutralism is something that can neither be blamed on inept American officials nor will it be overcome merely by better American diplomacy. Its main causes lie in India. Not even the many Americans who refuse to see that other people have reasons as solid and convincing to them as ours can deny this; nor can they possibly go along with Lederer and Burdick, who say no less than that India is "neutral" because some "son of a bitch" on our Asian diplomatic front has made a mess of his job.

THIS RATHER NEGATIVE QUANTITY is all the information we get from *The Ugly American* about India, and about American relations to the country whose political course is likely to decide the fate of the entire Asian world. I know that the book was not written to give us exact and sufficient information for sober judgment but rather to denounce and attack and thereby move us into some sort of action. Also, the subcontinent of India lies not within the region of Southeast Asia proper, with which *The Ugly American* is primarily concerned. However, the accusations of these authors all have a global ring; Lederer and Burdick bring up India because they want to demonstrate what dreadful harm the unreliability and incompetence of Americans stationed in the Far East have already done; furthermore, the book purports to be written in order to give "thinking Americans" a sharper view of the entire problem of American policy in Asia, no part of which is greater than that allotted to our diplomats and officials concerned with India. This would have justified, once India was given fictional treatment, some reference in the Factual Epilogue to the huge and highly complicated task of maintaining, in the face of a quickly developing Soviet economic offensive, our present tolerable relations to this largest of all "uncommitted" countries of the world. But instead of some facts or sensible ideas on American-Indian relations, all we get is a novel interpretation of contemporary history, according to which a decisive fact like India's "neutralism" does not result from her geographic position and economic interests, the inherited concepts and disposition of her masses, or the ideas and passions of her leaders, but is the consequence of ill-timed fornication by a low-ranking official in the United States government service.

Could it be that Lederer and Burdick shied away from this subject because its proper treatment would have revealed how false most of the premises are on which they base their accusations? India *does* need "big projects," and wants them not as a "means to power and wealth" for a few "local politicians," as Lederer and Burdick say (again

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without being specific as to the country or the actual projects they have in mind). There, more than in any other Asian country, a certain number of dams, highways, vast and small irrigation systems as well as large industries are indispensable conditions for any significant step toward an improvement in the life of the people. The Russians, of course, know this. As recently as February 4, 1959, a Russian-built steel mill with a capacity of 1,000,000 tons a year costing an estimated $275,000,000, was officially opened in India. Lederer and Burdick could also have mentioned that many competent and devoted Americans have now worked for quite a number of years in Indian villages on the kind of "small projects" for which *The Ugly American* makes such narrow-minded propaganda, and whose benefits Lederer and Burdick praise with such unbalanced zeal.

BECAUSE I PLAN to treat the vital problem of Western aid to India in another context, I shall limit myself at this point to a few bare but essential facts.[29] India's need for the remaining two years of her second Five-Year Plan is a minimum of one billion dollars in long-term loans from the United States. Much is being said about the gigantic race for a better life that goes on between the world's two most populous countries, India and China. The outcome of this race will probably decide whether Communism will triumph in India and thus inevitably spread over the entire Asian world. Yet the chances for India of getting these loans are extremely poor—unless Congress, in a spirit of enlightened self-interest, grasps this historical opportunity "to prove our case," as Walter Lippmann recently wrote, which is "that material progress can be had with civil liberty in a big country..."

Let no one think that India herself is making no efforts to pay the cost of her second Five-Year Plan. If income taxes were not raised, it is because they are already now considerably higher than in the United States. But many new taxes have been introduced to finance the various projects of the plan: in the future the Indian consumer will have to pay more for his various luxuries because of higher indirect taxes. Duties on cigarettes will be increased by 16 per cent, in a country where a package of fifty costs one dollar, the equivalent of at least five dollars for an American package of twenty compared by the level of wages and salaries. There will be tax increases also on tea, sugar, automobile tires, and many other local and imported items to cover part of the deficit of the 1959–60 budget, which even a cutback of $50,000,000 for India's armed forces cannot balance.

India will achieve the basic objective of raising her living standard only through a rapid and well-planned industrialization. For this she needs steel, and this is why her leaders seem to be obsessed with the

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29 For an informative discussion of India's needs for her Second Five-Year Plan, see Matthew J. Kust, "U.S. Aid to India—How Much is Enough?" in the *New Republic* of December 15, 1958. A great deal of valuable information on this subject is contained in a recent series of articles from India in the *New York Times*, by Averell Harriman.

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idea of supplying the country with modern steel plants, and if possible even of outdoing the Chinese in the production of steel. During the next four years India's annual steel demand will rise from the present level of three million tons to six million tons. As India is rich in iron ore and coal, and certainly has no lack of manpower, it was a "business-like" decision of her leaders to double the country's steel production instead of keeping her new industry dependent on an annual steel import of three million tons.

However, in contrast to the much-discussed second Five-Year Plan, whose emphasis is on industrialization,, the first Indian Five-Year Plan was directed toward increased food production. This explains why its outstanding features were community development projects and stimulation of village activities. Our Indian technical assistance program, for which a better name would be American-Indian technical cooperation, started in 1952. Thirty-one different projects were undertaken to assist India in attaining the object of the plan—to produce more food for her hungry millions—not one being either a highway or a dam. Let us by all means continue the many small projects we have been supporting in India as elsewhere in Asia ever since this program began; but if Lederer's and Burdick's small and "almost costless" projects are all the aid India can expect from the West, she will have no choice but to seek more and more Soviet economic assistance, which can only increase the danger, now still very small, that forced by circumstances India will adopt the drastic Communist methods to speed up her economic development and thus become submerged in the Communist system.

For all these reasons, a proper treatment of India by Lederer and Burdick would have shown that our relations to that country will not deteriorate because too few American officials are willing to learn a foreign language or are able to do a good job in whatever capacity they work abroad. What we achieve on this vital diplomatic front will primarily depend on the degree of enlightenment that the makers of our our foreign policy possess, and whether Congress is capable of a positive attitude toward the question of aid to India.

III

Let us now move toward India's eastern neighbor and see what *The Ugly American* can teach us about Burma, one of the few real countries mentioned in the book. Burma, although no longer troubled by American aid, is actually made the locale of a long story, another one about that rare phenomenon, the American in Asia, of whose beliefs and activities Lederer and Burdick approve—needless to say, he is not a government official. This is the story of Father Finian, the Catholic priest who, after identifying Communism with "the face of the devil" felt called upon to fight it in Burma with weapons of his own invention, modestly resolved to defeat Communism "even if he had to do it alone." Finian certainly takes no notice of the fact that the Burmese themselves have waged their own desperate and quite bloody

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war against Communism ever since the Communists started their armed insurrection in March 1948. Nor does he seem to know that they had done well against tremendous odds, and in fact already defeated the Communists when Finian, after deciding to save them, "crystallized his plan of attack."

The place Lederer and Burdick call Burma never emerges as a real country, which in Asia too means a complex of social conditions, conflicting political interests and a great variety of public institutions. There is not a word to be found in *The Ugly American* about the political parties of Burma, the country's government, her officials, her army, or the Burmese efforts to build a society on the principles of democracy and social justice. Consequently, the story contains no hint that most Burmese leaders have become acquainted with the evils of Communism not so much through their diligent study of Marx and Engels (the method recommended for Americans by Lederer and Burdick), but rather because Communist activity threatened their lives as well as their political aspirations. The territory of Finian's duel with the devil is a perfect political and administrative desert, occupied by a population unengaged in any form of indigenous political life, and apparently only waiting to be either enslaved by Russian-directed Communists or saved by a "practical, tough-minded and thoughtful" fellow from Worcester, Mass.

But although the country of the story entitled "Nine Friends" is about as attractive to us as an empty rice bowl must be to a hungry Burmese, it has the great merit of telling us more about the Lederer-and-Burdick concept of Communism and anti-Communism in Asia than any other story in the book. This is my excuse—and the reader will see how badly I need one—for devoting the following pages to an abbreviated version of Father Finian's Burmese adventure.

As MIGHT BE EXPECTED from a man of his profession, Father Finian's approach to politics is that of a strict moralist, if not actually of a religious fanatic, an approach with which I am the last one to quarrel provided it is understood to mean only the manner in which someone engaged in politics may conceive of his personal task. A political activist who condemns himself for his failures and berates his own lack of zeal may not deserve to be imitated, but he can always expect, even from political opponents, some degree of esteem. The trouble with most moralists, however, is that they are likely to condemn others, friends as well as enemies, more vigorously than themselves. Because they take their personal rules of conduct as universally valid and denounce any deviation as a breach of moral law, they are essentially unfit to work harmoniously with others, and are usually willing to accept cooperation only on their own strict terms.

Unfortunately, this attitude is not uncommon among many well-meaning and devoted Americans in Asia, and it is one that no rhetoric of humility can disguise for very long. It is a pitfall for the critic of American behavior abroad of which Lederer and Burdick seem to be

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entirely unaware. I admit there is nothing wrong with advising Americans who want to fight Communism in Southeast Asia to flee the cities and "work with the people in the villages," as a popular saying among critics of foreign aid now goes. It will often be necessary for these Americans to deprive themselves of their germ-free meals and eat the local foods. They should, of course, study, as Finian did, "the culture, the history, and anthropology of the country" they choose to work in, and preferably also the writings of Lenin, Stalin, Engels and Marx. But if their efforts and sacrifices lead them to believe that they know better than the Asians themselves how Communism must be fought in an Asian country, they should definitely be discouraged from going to the Far East.

In Father Finian, who is as unconvincing an invention as Salomon Asch, the sin of moral and intellectual conceit in politics takes on a most obnoxious form. The very idea that a Western Catholic should feel qualified to teach the people of Buddhist Burma what to think and do about Communism is to me as ridiculous as it must be insulting to the many Burmese whose successful struggle against Communism is the reason why an American priest can today go to Burma at all. I shall pass over the remarkable brain of this political innovator who needed a mere four weeks to speak Burmese in "simple sentences" ("the grammar came quite unconsciously"), and comment on his delicate stomach and weak digestive tract only because of the immense moral importance Finian's creators attach to his suffering from a rather common physical condition. We may pity a man thus afflicted, but unlike Lederer and Burdick, I do not feel compelled to express admiration for Finian's willingness to continue his work in spite of his sad plight. The reason may be that I have seen many Americans quite ready to eat the food of an Asian people whenever they were obliged by their tasks, or privileged enough in their local human relations, to share some of these people's lives. In fact, I have done so myself, with effects quite similar to those suffered by Father Finian, but without realizing that there was something heroic in my ordeal.

Although Lederer's and Burdick's description of Finian's character and knowledge had already made me doubt their ability to create an American who makes political sense and is a tolerable human being, I was still quite unprepared for the monstrous snob Finian turns out to be as soon as his story gets under way. In spite of an apparent humility in discussing his plans with the eight Burmese he has recruited, Finian is really more righteous in judging and leading the Burmese people than any of the biblical prophets who tried to lead, and spent their lives condemning the Jews. I was not quite sure why I found it so distasteful to hear Finian say that "he had to find at least one native Catholic who was courageous," until an Asian friend of mine told me this remark obviously implies that a courageous man is the hardest thing to find in the East. In regard to the other seven, whom Finian did not require to be Catholic but merely that "they be honest and courageous," he comments with equal tact that this was "asking quite a bit."

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Such language is quite in character with a man who from his position of unconscious Western and white conceit regards the Burmese —unless the opposite can be proved in a series of humiliating tests to which he submits them—as potential cowards, liars, and thieves. "All his training as a Jesuit," Lederer and Burdick tell us, "all his alertness, every available trick and wile had been necessary" to find the eight Burmese whom Finian was eventually willing to trust. I am sure it never entered the authors' heads how much more logical it would have been for the Burmese of their story to show distrust for this presumptuous white man who set himself up as a native organizer, judge of Burmese character, and local political chief. To encounter an American of such pretensions should be reason enough for the most trusting of all Burmese to test his motives and to question his political sanity. But Lederer and Burdick are obviously convinced that a superior comprehension of the nature of Communism is just another item in the arsenal of America's much envied wealth, and that in this respect too the peoples of Southeast Asia must be regarded as "underdeveloped."

THE ASSUMPTION on which Lederer and Burdick base their hero's "plan of attack" is that all Communist activities aim at making sure that there is no improvement in the people's material condition. But this truth (of which the best one can say is that it sounds slightly dated), is unfortunately well-hidden by the Communists. "The evil of Communism," writes Finian in his diary, "is that it has masked from the native peoples the simple fact that it intends to ruin them." Since nobody wants to be "ruined," the only truly effective method of defeating Communism is to reveal to the people the Communists' real aim. In a manner suggesting surprise that no one before him had ever had such a splendid idea, Finian concludes that what he needs is a newspaper in which the Communists can be unmasked. He proceeds to produce one, on a "machine" with which he had wisely provided himself before leaving the "jungle." But knowing what he and his friends are up against (they were "only nine against three thousand active Communists") he employs more "tricks" and "wiles" than the devil himself. Here is his chief trick: In order both to deceive the Communists and to reach the Communist-influenced peasant masses, Finian calls his anti-Communist paper *The Communist Farmer.*

"This was cunning," Lederer and Burdick say in praise of their own ingenuity, apparently quite unaware of the fact that no Communist paper for farmers ever was, nor is likely ever to be called anything but *The Democratic Farmer.* This "cunning" was so successful that "initially the Communists did not know whether to support or oppose the newspaper," which "appeared mysteriously and suddenly in market places, stores, doorsteps, village squares, buses and streets." Was it distributed free and if so, where did Finian get the money to supply himself with paper, to house his "machine" and to support himself and his busy crew? From a remark in another story one is led to believe that his paper was at the beginning an "underground paper." Were

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the Communists in actual power? Or are we supposed to believe that the anti-Communist Burmese officials regarded Finian's attempt to beat their Communist foes as illegal? Questions of this nature are never raised by Lederer and Burdick, who also ignore the "fact" that hardly more than thirty per cent of these northern Burmese peasants would be able to read. And what did these peasants get to read in order to learn that the Communists intended to ruin them? "In each issue there was an article by a famous Communist—Stalin, Marx, Lenin, Mao Tse-tung, Chou En-lai, Plekhanov. One issue had an article by Karl Marx in which he attacked the stupidity and backwardness of the peasants. Another issue offered a speech by Stalin in which he justified his slaughter of the 'kulaks' on the grounds that agriculture must be 'collectivized.' ". (Whether these articles were genuine or the fruit of Finian's "cunning" we are not told.) "The rest of the issue was simple reporting of facts about farming difficulties in Russia, the agricultural progress in the United States, hints on how to increase farm production, advice on how to utilize fertilizer." (But, alas, no "hints" on how to get it.)

As was to be expected, "the Communist party was confused for only two issues." Thereafter "the Communist press was printing almost nothing except replies to *The Communist Farmer.*" The attempt by the Communists to suppress the paper only raised the demand for it "and copies became prized." The Communists tried to kill the men who made it, but "for the first time" their "espionage failed," and "the Communists slowly became buffoons in the eyes of the local Burmese. People actually laughed at statements made at Communist rallies." When, as a result of Finian's work, the Communist Party in northern Burma became actually "antic," the old leaders were replaced; but the new ones were also quickly purged "and their replacements were in turn removed." This was so funny that a "joke" began to circulate "that the quickest way to die was to be made a high official of the Communist party." However, the "climax" came only with the arrival of a man from Moscow, a Russian expert on Burma. "He was tall, wiry, hard-faced, a veteran of purges, conspiracies, plots, and counterplots. He had never failed. His name was Vinich." And his plan to destroy *The Communist Farmer,* Lederer and Burdick assure us, "was so good it almost deserved to succeed."

I cannot go on to say how this excellent but undisclosed plan went wrong without first reminding the reader, by way of excuse for myself, of the many prominent people and papers that found *The Ugly American* so wonderfully humorous, so delightfully readable, so important and completely persuasive, so full of concreteness and substance, so squarely based on fact. The Communist plan to destroy *The Communist Farmer* went wrong because of Toki. "Toki was thorough and inconspicuous, and his memory was infallible." And Toki had been sent by Finian into the Communist apparatus as a spy. "Three weeks after the arrival of Vinich," *The Communist Farmer* (now appearing almost daily) "advertised that on June 10, at 2:00 p.m., there would be a radio broadcast of great importance . . ." It took place, and the voice of Vinich

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was heard by the entire peasant population of the province of Anthkata (who, unlike other Burmese peasants, seem to possess radios). The broadcast was a tape recording made by the inconspicuous Toki in a secret meeting of the local Communists. "Cunningly," Lederer and Burdick make Vinich say exactly what you would expect them to believe is being said by a leading Communist in a secret meeting. "You've got to remember," Vinich snaps at his subordinates, "that the worse things are, the better they are. Lenin said that. Which means that the mulberry and rice crops have to fail here. Which means that the road transport scheme has to fail." This broadcast, of course, meant the end of Communism in Anthkata.

I am glad to report that by the time Finian had licked Communism in northern Burma "the pain in his bowels had finally disappeared." He is now on his way to Sarkhan (the country invented by Lederer and Burdick as fictional background for most of their other stories), and hopes that the food there will not make him too sick. But whatever will become of him in Sarkhan, I am sure no reader will want to hear another word about his invention of new anti-Communist tactics. And if Lederer and Burdick have the least bit of talent in describing an actual person, certainly no reader will ever want to meet the man after whom Finian was "drawn from life."

IV

But let us forget Father Finian and take a brief look at Sarkhan. In contrast to India or Burma, Sarkhan has the immense advantage for Lederer and Burdick of existing only in the world of fiction. They exploit this advantage with great zest, as if to underline how much their political imagination depends on being unrestrained by facts. They cram into their description of Sarkhan every dubious detail anyone has ever reported from any corner of Asia about the reasons for American failures and Communist gains. From one country, they borrow Ambassador Sears who talks like Salomon Asch and like Asch lacks "professional training," but unlike Asch is a true master of diplomatic misconduct and political bungling. From another country, Sarkhan gets all the "facts" that illustrate how anti-Americanism is fostered by the inefficiency of our aid officials and by the wrong kind of American aid. Still another country is the source of Sarkhan's government-abetted corruption, while a fourth supplies Lederer and Burdick with the material to show that the Communist party has become a strong contender for power in Sarkhan, apparently through our failure to "be more expert in its problems than are the natives." The list of troubles we have in this hybrid country could be lengthened—no American, for instance, speaks Sarkhanese—but there is no need to go into further details. Evidently, Sarkhan is the place to which we must send all the people who refuse to believe what *The Ugly American* has to say about our failures in Southeast Asia.

What we learn from the stories located in this country about our Foreign Service is indeed sad and revolting; and it is not surprising if

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it enraged people who, in reading *The Ugly American,* somehow managed to forget that the real trouble with Sarkhan is that it does not exist. Even if every single ugly detail of the Sarkhanese stories had actually occurred in one or the other of the many Asian countries, this composite picture of American official stupidity and misbehavior would still be untrue—a piece of fiction for which there exists no model in the world of fact. To me it sounds about as convincing as would a fictional representation of America by a foreign writer who showed that in the United States all politicians favor segregation, all labor leaders embezzle union funds, all generals demand an immediate war on Communist China, all intellectuals are drunkards, all Communists are imprisoned, all teenagers are delinquents and all magazines are devoted exclusively to advertising, comic-strips, sex scandals and crime —with a "factual epilogue" giving real examples to prove that this picture of America is "based on fact."

The only remark made by Lederer and Burdick about their fictional country which I cannot dispute is that "Sarkhan is different from Vietnam" (and not only because it is "very hilly"; most of Vietnam is quite hilly too). Vietnam's main difference from Sarkhan is that it exists, which enables the critical reader to examine for himself to what extent the stories located in Vietnam are based on fact. I shall use them as one final proof for my statement that Lederer's and Burdick's political reasoning is of the same quality as their facts and figures.

AT LEAST FOUR of *The Ugly American*'s twenty stories deal with Vietnam: the story of Senator Jonathan Brown, who tried to find out what was done with the billions we spent for the French in Indochina; one of the two stories about the "ugly" American Homer Atkins (who later goes to Sarkhan); and the two stories devoted to the Indochina war, entitled "The Iron of War" and "The Lessons of War." These stories all describe events and conditions, real or imaginary, of at least six years ago. When Homer Atkins got into trouble with our officials in Vietnam, the French were still running the country, and it was the clever French, not our slow-witted American officials, who planned and conducted the tours that eventually defeated Senator Brown's robust body and inquisitive mind. To the problems we are facing in Vietnam today, the Indochina-stories of *The Ugly American* are entirely unrelated. But they deserve to be singled out (together with the comments on them in the Factual Epilogue), because they serve Lederer and Burdick to explain what they consider to be the lesson of the Indochina war.

I do not want to discuss here why I considered our Indochina policy before 1954 as basically mistaken, nor what could have been the alternative to American support for the French in the Indochina war; I know that this support was always given with twinges of conscience, under the misconception that the struggle for Indochina had ceased to be an anti-colonial revolution and had become merely a localized

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war between the Communist world and the democratic West. This is too immense and too complicated a problem of contemporary political history to be treated briefly or lightly, and if some of the following remarks sound frivolous and farcical, I must remind the reader that I am merely reporting what Lederer and Burdick tell us is the main lesson of the Indochina war. In their opinion, a simple case of "avoidable ignorance" is the cause of the West's disastrous defeat in Indochina. The French lost in Indochina because they neglected to read the books the Communists themselves had written about their plans and tactical methods for winning wars, books from which we and the French could have learned, had we only read them, how to defeat the Communist guerillas.

"For years," Lederer and Burdick write in the Factual Epilogue, "both we and our allies have put in much expensive effort trying to ferret out in advance the Communist plan for both tactical maneuvers and great conquests. Yet, during the struggle in Indochina the authors could find no American (or French) military or civilian official who had read ... the over-all Communist operation plan contained in *The Selected Works* of Mao Tse-tung." Lederer and Burdick even exclude the possibility that French and American officials familiar with Mao's works might have existed although they could not find them. Our military missions, they say, "advised, and the French went down in defeat, without having studied Mao's writings."

In a dispatch from Paris in the *New York Times* of November 15, 1958, which deals with French army opposition to de Gaulle, C. L. Sulzberger writes: "The army's professional cadres are dominated by men who fought through the unsuccessful Indochina campaign and, in the process, studied the tactics of Mao Tse-tung and his Vietminh Communist friends. Without accepting Mao's ideology, they were deeply impressed by his methods of infiltrating civilian populations."

This sounds more like the French. Unlike American generals, who are evidently more addicted to writing than to reading books, French generals have always been known for their preoccupation with theories of warfare. They have had in their colonies some experience with guerillas for more than a hundred years. If their daily troubles during the Indochina war had not forced them to study their enemy's military tactics, the many French journalist and writers conversant with this subject would certainly have prevented the substance of Mao's writing from remaining a secret in French Indochina and France. But would even the most intimate knowledge of Communist military methods and tactical directives have made the French more successful against the Vietminh guerillas? And would Mao Tse-tung have published his "plans" and instructions for warfare in Asia if there had been danger that their study by the French might have reduced the effectiveness of Communist military tactics in Indochina?

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE WEST'S defeat in Indochina is not nearly so simple as Lederer and Burdick make it out. Even if the Com-

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munists did not know better than to write books that teach us how we can defeat them, the study of their books would still not have helped to win the Indochina war. Although it was bloody and costly in men and materiel, the Indochina war was primarily a political struggle. The laws of politics are not identical with the laws of warfare. To learn the "secret" of an enemy's political strength does not mean that his strength is bound to diminish. In the great struggles of our time, our enemies have always made their plans and tactics known in advance. A frank and detailed blueprint for accession to power and subsequent conquest has not helped us in the case of Hitler, nor is it now helping us in the case of Nasser. This is why the most thorough study of Mao's writings could never have saved the French. It could, and probably did, teach them what made Communist guerrilla tactics successful, but it could not, and certainly did not, provide them with the means of making these tactics ineffective. The French were unable to defeat the Communist guerrillas because they failed to convince the Vietnamese people that the aims of France were compatible with Vietnamese national aspirations. The French generals in Indochina could have known the collected works of Mao Tse-tung by heart and still would have lacked what they needed to win—sufficient support from the people of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. It was French policy, the attempt to preserve French colonial rule, not ignorance of Mao Tse-tung's writings, which made it impossible to defeat the Vietminh.

That the French lost in Indochina for political reasons is a fact of which Lederer and Burdick must be as fully aware as they undoubtedly are of the real causes underlying Manila's present difficulties with Washington; if they have chosen to disregard it, this can only be because such a fact does not fit into their peculiar scheme of building up proof for their accusations against American foreign aid. This scheme required that in their treatment of the Indochina war too, the causes of failure had to be reduced to purely technical and personal matters.

The Indochina war thus provides Lederer and Burdick with just one more opportunity to expound their thesis that our success in foreign policy depends chiefly on knowledge and skills, on "tricks" and "wiles," and on learning our enemy's "secrets." Not once do these authors mention the painful truth that in our relations with other countries we are likely to meet obstacles which diplomatic proficiency alone will never overcome. Some of these obstacles consist of vital economic interests, of rigid ideological positions, of inflexible political views. Success against them depends on the nature of our political aims, on whether we practice, in concrete instances, the high principles we are in the habit of preaching, on whether the tasks with which our diplomats are charged confirm that American foreign policy aims at a world of freedom, justice, and economic progress for all.

Through the effect that *The Ugly American* has had on the public mind, this book's questionable accuracy and controversial political value have now become major issues in our debates on foreign policy

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and on the merits of foreign aid. It was obviously not written in order to add to our theoretical understanding of these problems, but rather to influence *practical politics* as directly as this can be done by a book. In principle, this is as desirable a way of trying to improve political decisions as I can think of, but the manner in which Lederer and Burdick went about it is most deplorable, to say the least. If the stubborn solemnity of Lederer's and Burdick's discourse in the Factual Epilogue did not belie such an assumption, I would say that *The Ugly American* was written to confirm a cynical maxim by Henry Adams, according to which "practical politics consist in ignoring facts."

Foreign aid is once more under heavy attack. The entire program is being reexamined, in a mood which leaves no doubt that most people are disappointed in its results. It would be foolish to believe that this is due only to hostile propaganda. Foreign aid has quite obviously failed to achieve what people expected, and has in many instances justified the criticisms that have accumulated against it during the years. For these reasons, I have welcomed every article or book that attempted to show in what respects our aid policies might be misguided and our administrative performances poor. Now that I have done with *The Ugly American,* I should like to say that I came to this book in the same spirit. Even after reading it, I still believe that permanent criticism in public discussion of our aid programs and administrations is indispensable for their improvement. If I were to write further on this subject, I would in all likelihood produce a highly critical survey and not a eulogy. I am aware that this essay contains little that is critical of either policy or administration. The reason is simply that it was written for a different purpose, which I hope I have accomplished. Only after we rid ourselves of the false notions that *The Ugly American* has spread can the serious task of criticizing foreign aid begin.

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